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HISTORY of WAR

STALIN'S SPITFIRE
Inside the Yak-9 fighter

NAPOLEON IN EGYPT
- Daring campaign to conquer the Orient
- Adam Zamoyski unravels the Bonaparte myth
- How Nelson's Nile victory crushed French plans

DESERT STORM
Triumph of the 36-army coalition

Battle of Tewkesbury
Inside the most decisive War of the Roses clash

FUTURE
ISSUE 086

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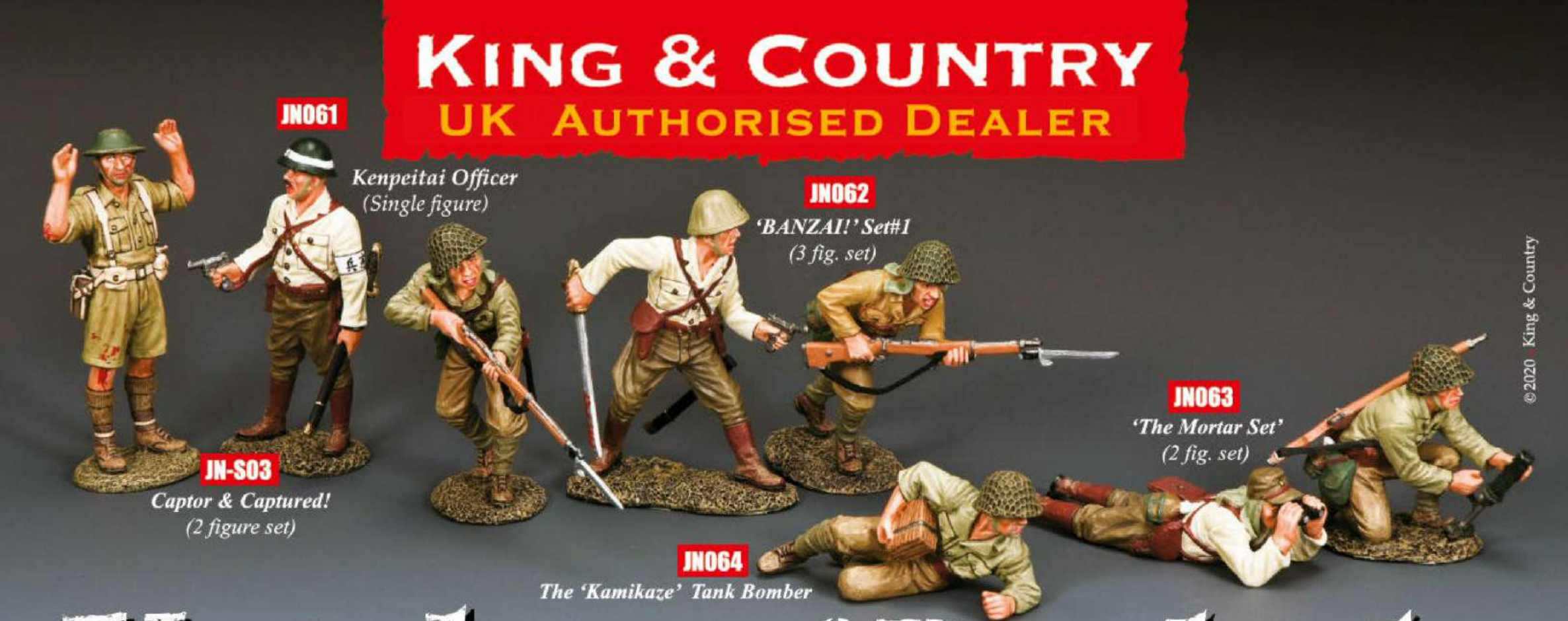

Knights of Bushido

During WW2, *'BUSHIDO'*, originally an ancient *Samurai* code of honour dedicated to their way of life and concept of chivalry was transformed into Imperial Japan's cruel and violent way to wage war on enemy soldiers and civilians.

Japanese soldiers were indoctrinated with the belief that to die for the Emperor was their greatest honour... and to be captured was their worst shame.

Allied soldiers who surrendered to the Japanese – regardless of their courage in battle were seen to be beneath contempt and suffered accordingly. In Japanese eyes *'No quarter was asked... and none was given'*.

Here are latest King & Country *Japanese infantry in action,* alongwith some senior officers and a member of the infamous *Kenpeitai* Military Police.

There's also a brand-new *'Type 92'* light tank as well as our existing *'Type 95'*.

Although all-conquering at the beginning of the Pacific War the Imperial Japanese Army was soon to meet their match when the Allies went on the offensive.

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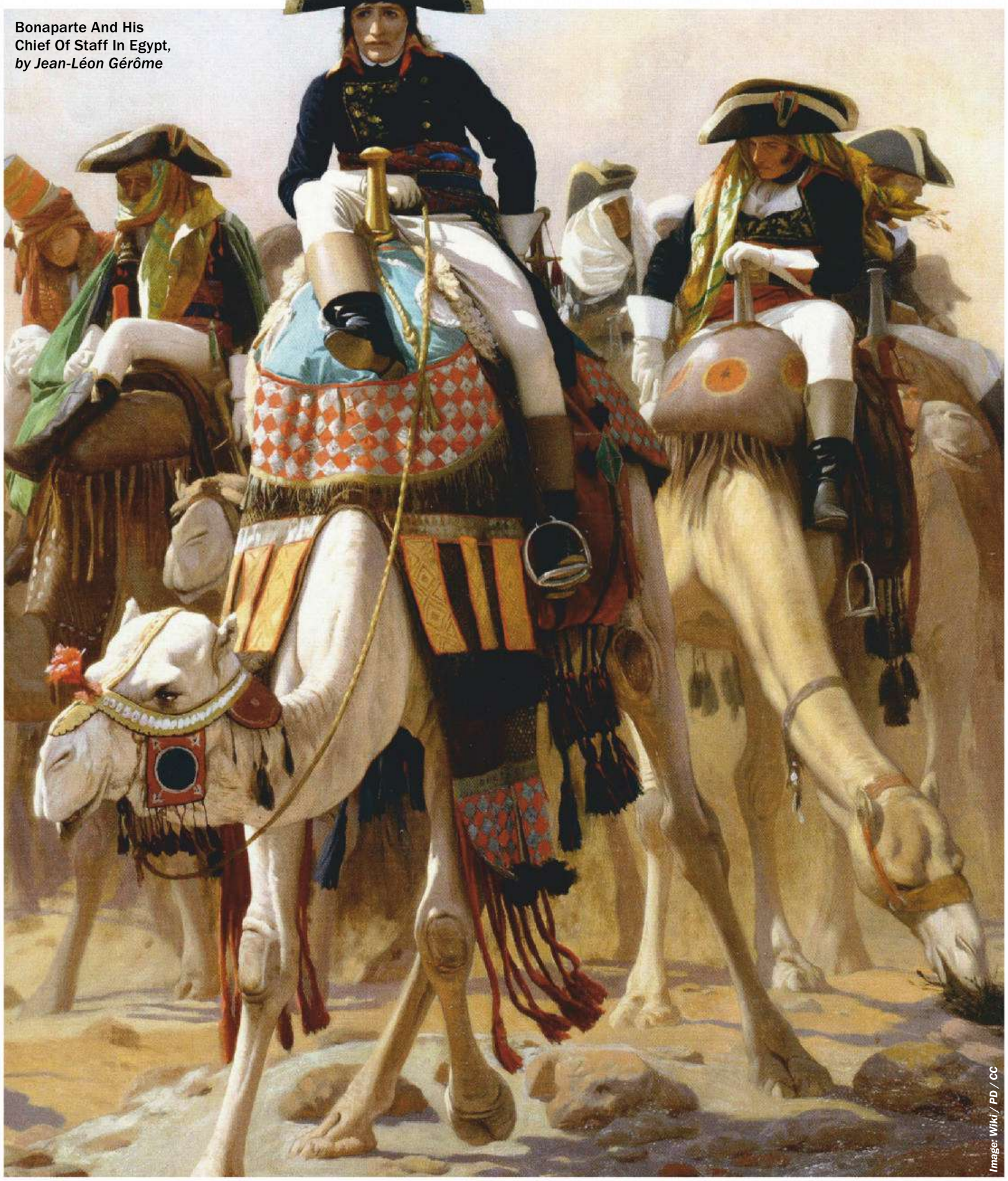

Bonaparte And His Chief Of Staff In Egypt, *by Jean-Léon Gérôme*

Image: Wiki / PD / CC

Welcome

Though he would later come to define an era, with almost unrivalled accomplishments on and off the battlefield, when the young general Bonaparte embarked on an audacious expedition to Egypt in 1798, his future triumphs were by no means certain. Already beloved by the French public for his battlefield victories, Napoleon was distrusted by some politicians in Paris, and his campaign in the Orient could easily have crushed his ascendant reputation. Despite eventually ending in strategic failure, the campaign did not slow the general's rise to power, but instead now holds an almost mythical status in his legendary story.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER

Tom spoke with Napoleonic expert Adam Zamoyski this issue, who discusses the myths behind Napoleon's Egypt campaign (p. 32). Elsewhere, he explores the history of a famed African-American regiment in the US Civil War (p. 54).

STUART HADAWAY

For this issue's Operator's Handbook, RAF researcher Stuart takes a look at the prolific Yakovlev Yak-9. This Soviet fighter plane played a critical role in the battle for air superiority on the Eastern Front (p. 64).

BERNARD WILKIN

Father and son historians Bernard and René Wilkin turn their attention to the French Republic's failed 1798 Egypt campaign in this issue. Turn to page 24 to discover why the ambitious expedition turned from triumph to disaster.

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This firearm was owned by the Russian emperor

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This prolific fighter was the core of the Soviet air fleet

WAR in FOCUS

LUNCHTIME ON THE FRONT

Taken: c.1917

Bulgarian soldiers dig into a meal in their trench in the Doiran area of the Salonikan front, also known as the Macedonian front, 1917. Stretching from Albanian Adriatic coast to the Greek Aegean, this front saw over 500,000 Entente troops, including French and British, facing across no man's land towards Bulgarian, Austro-Hungarian, German and Turkish forces.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

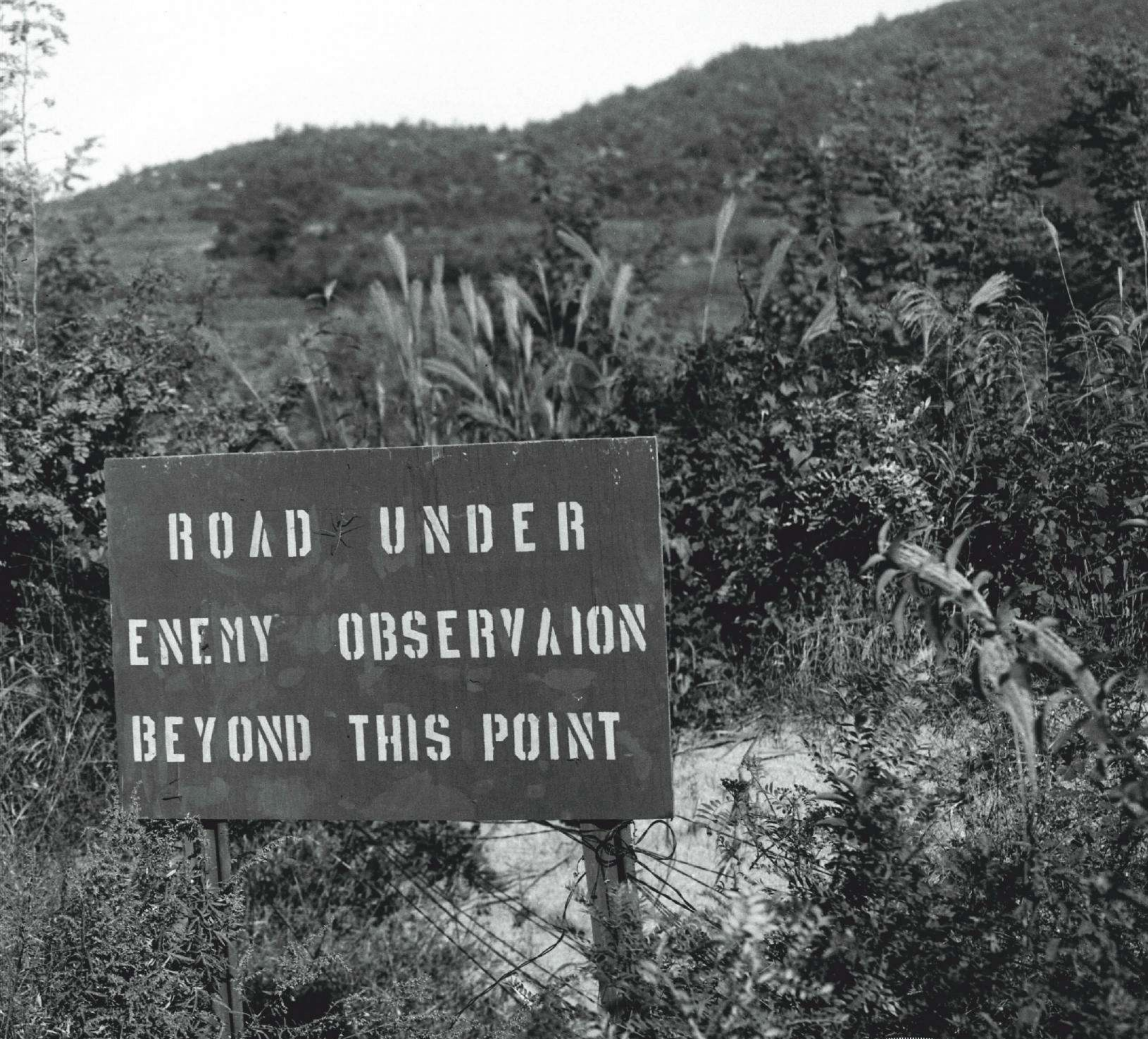
AFGHAN ARTILLERY

Taken: c.1979-1989

By 1989, Soviet forces were almost entirely withdrawn from Afghanistan where they had been fighting unsuccessfully for almost ten years. With its main ally gone, the communist Afghan regime continued the fight alone against the Mujahidin and other rebel forces, who at the time were backed by several Western powers, including the US.

© Getty

© Getty



WAR in FOCUS

BALLOTS AND BULLETS

Taken: 19 October, 1952

A GI walks past two signs: one reminding personnel of the danger from enemy fire in the area, another urging troops to fill out their absentee ballots for the 1952 Presidential election. Harry Truman's second term as president came to an end when Republican nominee and WWII hero Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected in a landslide victory with 442 electoral votes.

TIMELINE OF THE...

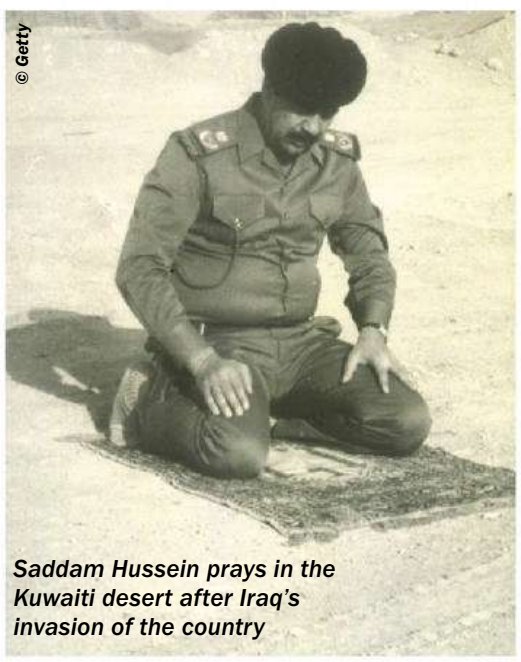
GULF WAR

The first conflict of the 1990s saw a huge United Nations coalition liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in the largest military alliance assembled since WWII

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

2-4 August 1990

INVASION OF KUWAIT



© Getty

Saddam Hussein prays in the Kuwaiti desert after Iraq's invasion of the country

Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraqi forces invade Kuwait to gain more control over its oil supply. Kuwaiti forces are overwhelmed and Saudi Arabia comes under the threat of invasion. A follow-up conquest of Saudi Arabia has the potential to leave 40 percent of the world's oil reserves under Saddam's dictatorial control.

2 August 1990

BATTLE OF DASMAN PALACE 01

Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, is forced to leave his residence at Dasman Palace when it is attacked by Iraqi Special Forces and elements of the Iraqi Republican Guard. The emir vacates the premises in a helicopter to Saudi Arabia but his younger brother, Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad is killed.

2 August 1990

BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHT 149 02

385 passengers and crew of a BA flight are captured by Iraqi forces after landing at Kuwait International Airport. A diplomatic crisis develops when the passengers and crew are held as hostages with some being used as 'human shields' to deter UN military operations. One Kuwaiti passenger is killed while the rest of the hostages are released after negotiations with Saddam Hussein are undertaken by the former British Prime Minister Edward Heath.

The BA Boeing 747-116 aircraft is destroyed by Iraqi forces

© Alamy

American and Saudi Arabian fighter jets fly over burning oil wells over Kuwait, 17 January 1991

OPERATION DESERT STORM

Desert Storm begins when the Coalition flies over 100,000 sorties and drops almost 90,000 tons of bombs against Iraqi positions in Iraq and Kuwait. The Coalition quickly gains air superiority over the numerically inferior Iraqi Air Force and their success enables Desert Storm's ground offensive to commence.

17 January-23 February 1991

29 November 1990

NAVAL OPERATIONS

The Iraqi Navy is almost completely destroyed in the Persian Gulf by Coalition naval forces. After a series of engagements at Ad-Dawrah, Qurah, Maradim and Bubiyan, the Iraqis lose over 100 vessels of all types, including 19 sunken ships.

USS Missouri fires its 16-inch guns as night shelling of Iraqi targets takes place along the northern Kuwaiti coast

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

18 January-2 February 1991

The remains of one of the two American F-16 aircraft that are shot down during the airstrike. Their pilots are captured by Iraqi forces

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

PACKAGE Q STRIKE 03

The largest airstrike of the war occurs when the US Air Force attacks a number of targets in Baghdad. The main target is Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Centre but American aircraft fail to destroy it. Seventy-eight American aircraft take part, including 56 F-16 Fighting Falcons.

19 January 1991

29 January-1 February 1991

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THE COALITION FORMS

UN Security Council Resolution 678 orders Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991. In the event of Iraq's non-compliance with the resolution, a UN coalition forms to liberate Kuwait by force. It is led by the US but comprises 35 other countries including Saudi Arabia, Britain, Egypt and France.

The United Nations Security Council votes to authorise the use of military force against Iraq in New York

BATTLE OF KHAFJI 04

The first major ground engagement of the war takes place in and around the Saudi Arabian city of Khafji after Saddam Hussein orders an invasion of the country. Three Iraqi divisions invade and briefly occupy Khafji before Saudi-led Coalition forces recapture the city.

Qatari tank soldiers celebrate at Khafji, February 1991

© Getty

© Alamy

PACKAGE Q STRIKE 03

BATTLE OF 73 EASTING 05

BATTLE OF RUMAILA 08

BATTLE OF NORFOLK 06

BATTLE OF KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT 07

BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHT 149 02

BATTLE OF DASMAN PALACE 01

BATTLE OF KHAFJI 04

"OVER 2,000 VEHICLES ARE DESTROYED ALONG THE HIGHWAY ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF IRAQI CASUALTIES"

24-28 February 1991

LIBERATION OF KUWAIT

American-led Coalition forces launch the ground offensive of Operation Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait. The Iraqis withdraw from the country and most of the fighting occurs in Iraq itself. The liberation only takes four days to achieve after almost seven months of Iraqi occupation.

An F-14 flies over a burning oil field in Kuwait

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

25-27 February 1991

HIGHWAY OF DEATH

American, British, Canadian and French aircraft attack retreating Iraqi vehicles and personnel along Highway 80 – a six-lane road that runs from Kuwait City into Iraq towards Basra. Over 2,000 vehicles are destroyed along the highway along with thousands of Iraqi casualties, the majority of whom are captured.

Abandoned vehicles and equipment litter the road out of Kuwait into Iraq

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

26-27 February 1991

BATTLE OF 73 EASTING 05

Several Iraqi armoured divisions are decisively defeated by American and British forces in a grid coordinate area known as '73 Easting'. The Iraqis lose 160 tanks, 200 other vehicles and approximately 2,300 casualties. The Coalition only suffers losses of six killed, 19 wounded and one tracked vehicle.

An Iraqi Type 69 tank burns after an attack by the 1st British Armoured Division

© Alamy

BATTLE OF RUMAILA 08

The last battle of the war occurs after the ceasefire when the US 24th Infantry Division engages a withdrawing force of Iraqi armoured forces. The battle begins when Iraqi soldiers fire on an American patrol that enters their path of retreat. Over 700 Iraqi troops are killed, 3,000 are captured and hundreds of armoured vehicles are destroyed. There are no American fatalities.

A destroyed Iraqi column of vehicles, including a T-72 tank on Highway 8, pictured two days after the Battle of Rumaila

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

The debris remains of a transport aircraft and a small jet after the Coalition bomb Kuwait International Airport

Source: Wiki / PD

BATTLE OF KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT 07

Combined elements of 18 American and Iraqi divisions fight for control of Kuwait City's airport. The US 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions also enter the city and encounter fierce resistance. Other major pieces of the city's infrastructure, as well as the nearby airport, are destroyed or severely damaged. A major tank battle occurs at the airport with the Americans winning the battle.

© Getty

27 February 1991

27 February 1991

2 March 1991

28 February 1991

BATTLE OF NORFOLK 06

Named after 'Objective Norfolk' – an intersection of roads, desert trails and an Iraqi supply depot – this battle is a huge tank engagement between American, British and Iraqi armoured forces. Approximately 850 Iraqi tanks, along with hundreds of other combat vehicles, are destroyed in the second largest tank battle in American history after the Battle of the Bulge.

A silhouette of two Challenger tanks and their crews. British Challengers perform particularly well at Norfolk where none are lost to enemy action

Source: Wiki / UK Ministry of Defence

CEASEFIRE

US President George H. W. Bush announces a ceasefire in hostilities after the liberation of Kuwait City. Bush succinctly states, "Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met."

A member of the Kuwaiti resistance raises his rifle and national flag after the announcement of the ceasefire

© Getty

LEADERS & COMMANDERS

In 1990 the US-led Coalition gathered half a million men from 31 countries in Saudi Arabia. They were led by multinational senior commanders

Wiki / CC / PD

GENERAL H. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF
COALITION FORCES COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF *USA*

By 1990 Schwarzkopf was a highly experienced combat commander. Born in Trenton, New Jersey he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1956. He served in Vietnam first as an advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and then a battalion commander with the 6th Infantry. He was wounded four times in 1966 while leading an ARVN assault against the Viet Cong.

In 1983 as a major general, he was deputy commander of Joint Task Force 120 under Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III. This conducted Operation Urgent Fury, the invasion of Grenada designed to drive out Cuban troops. This was notable because it signalled renewed confidence by the US military for overseas expeditions following the humiliation of Vietnam. Five years later Schwarzkopf assumed command of US Central Command or CENTCOM based in Tampa, Florida, with responsibility for American military operations in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.

In his role as Coalition commander he was supported by Lieutenant General John Yeostock, commanding the US Army deployed for Desert Shield, Vice Admiral Stan Arthur commanding the US naval forces in the Gulf, Lieutenant General Walt Boomer commanding the US Marines in the Gulf and Lieutenant Chuck Horner commanding the US Air Force in the region. Schwarzkopf returned to America as a national hero and shortly after retired to write his bestselling memoir *It Doesn't Take A Hero*.

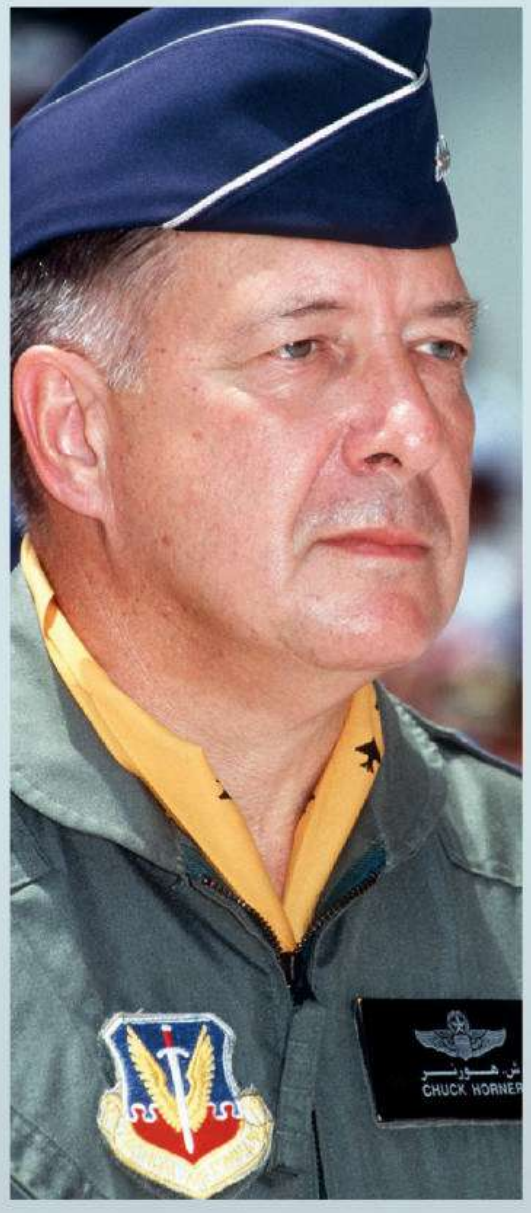
General Norman Schwarzkopf Coalition commander-in-chief

LIEUTENANT GENERAL PRINCE KHALID BIN SULTAN AL SAUD
SAUDI COMMANDER OF THE JOINT ARAB FORCES
SAUDI ARABIA

Khalid graduated from King Saud University. In the late 1960s he attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He also trained at the US Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He then graduated from the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Back in Saudi Arabia he oversaw the acquisition of guided missiles from China and then created the Saudi Air Defense Force, which he commanded. During Operation Desert Sabre he commanded Joint Forces Command North, consisting of units from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria. Schwarzkopf noted, "His military credentials were nowhere near as important as his princely blood, since almost all power in Saudi Arabia resides in an inner circle of the Royal family. Simply put, unlike other generals Khalid had the authority to write checks." After the war he retired and later became the Saudi Minister of Defense. Subsequently he commanded Saudi Arabia's controversial military intervention in neighbouring Yemen.

General Prince Khalid commander of the Joint Arab forces

Source: Wiki / PD Gov



Source: Wiki / PD Gov

GENERAL CHARLES 'CHUCK' HORNER

LED AMERICAN & ALLIED AIR FORCES DURING DESERT STORM *USA*

General Charles Horner joined the United States Air Force as a pilot in the late 1950s and flew numerous combat missions during the Vietnam War. By the late 1980s he had been appointed commander of the US Ninth Air Force as well as commander of CENTCOM's air forces. In the Gulf he initially acted as commander-in-chief until the arrival of General Schwarzkopf. His task was to degrade the Iraqi armed forces occupying Kuwait and in southern Iraq to a point where they would be unable to resist Schwarzkopf's ground offensive. The air campaign, known as Desert Storm, did this with great effect. He retired in 1994.

General Chuck Horner marching in the Welcome Home parade in New York City

GENERAL SIR PETER DE LA BILLIÈRE

BRITISH FORCES LEADER IN THE GULF *UK*

Peter de la Billière joined the British Army as a private in 1952, and was subsequently commissioned as a second lieutenant with the Durham Light Infantry. In the mid-1950s he joined the SAS seeing action in Malaya and Oman and Borneo. He became the regiment's director in 1979. Although due to retire de la Billière assumed command of the British Forces in the Middle East on 6 October 1990. Under his command the UK contingent grew from 14,000 men in November 1990 to more than 45,000 by the time the war against Iraq came to an end. His key unit was the British 1st Armoured Division commanded by Major General Rupert Smith. The division comprised the 4th and 7th Armoured Brigades under Brigadiers Christopher Hammerbeck and Patrick Cordingley. He retired after the war receiving the American Legion of Merit, Canadian Meritorious Service Cross and the Saudi Order of King Abdulaziz for his services.

General Peter de la Billière the British forces commander

© Alamy

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHEL ROQUEJEOFFRE

COMMANDER OF THE FRENCH RAPID REACTION FORCE *FRANCE*

Michel Roquejeoffre attended the premier French military academy at Sain-Cyr in 1952. He saw active service in Cambodia, Chad, Lebanon and Algeria. In Saudi Arabia his forces comprised Foreign Legion, Marine infantry, helicopter and armoured car units. His main strike formation was the French 6th Light Armoured Division commanded by Brigadier General Bernard Janvier. There was some concern they would not take part in the ground war, but Roquejeoffre did commit his troops to protect the Americans' far flank. Schwarzkopf liked Roquejeoffre noting "whom I respected and counted as a friend". He was awarded the Legion of Merit by America for his services in the Gulf.

Lieutenant General Michel Roquejeoffre led the French Rapid Reaction Force

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

BRIGADIER PATRICK CORDINGLEY

DESERT RATS COMMANDER *UK*

Patrick Cordingley joined the British Army in 1963 and two years later was commissioned into the 5th Royal Dragoon Guards. He saw service in Libya, Cyprus, Germany and Canada before teaching at the British Staff College. Then in 1988 he took command of the 7th Armoured Brigade – the famed Desert Rats. During the Gulf War his brigade fought the Iraqi 12th Armoured Division and the 48th Infantry Division capturing a series of positions dubbed Copper and Zinc. In the opening battles they knocked out almost 60 Iraqi armoured vehicles. After the war he was promoted to major general and commanded the British 2nd Division based in York. During which time he wrote *In The Eye Of The Storm* an account of his experiences in the Gulf War. He retired in 2000.

Desert Rats commander Brigadier Cordingley

© Alamy

BATTLE FOR KHAFJI

Controversially Saddam Hussein embarrassed the Coalition by seizing a Saudi town, from right under their very noses

The battle of Khafji was to be one of national prestige and as the area was Saudi soil, it was felt that the Saudi National Guard, with support from Qatari troops, should be given the role of driving the Iraqis out. These forces were under General Khalid, backed by US Marines and Coalition airpower. “Two British advisers from the British Military Mission to the National Guard accompanied the engagement,” Ambassador Alan Munro later admitted.

If the Coalition had given Saddam a breathing space, there is every reason to believe that he could have turned Khafji into a fortified stronghold. The Coalition knew from the Iran-Iraq War that the Iraqis were moderately competent in the offensive; of greater concern was the fact that they had fought eight years of almost continuous defensive action against the Iranians. The Iraqi Army was skilled in constructing defensive positions, berms, minefields and laying down artillery fire.

Jet strikes

At first the Saudis were slow in responding to Saddam’s invasion, blaming the lack of adequate air support from the US Marines. Once the Cobra helicopter gunship and Harrier and A-10 jet strikes got going they accounted for about 35 Iraqi tanks, alleviating the threat to the relief force. These air attacks also served to slow down the Saudis who withdrew two-three kilometres every time there was an air engagement. On their initial advance the Saudis successfully secured the surrender of five Iraqi tanks and six APCs outside the town, their crews demoralised by the airstrikes. Other units were not so keen to give up and one Saudi armoured vehicle was credited with knocking out eight Iraqi tanks.

In light of the Iraqi artillery fire it was decided to launch the first assault under the cover of darkness, potentially a tricky operation despite the use of modern technology such as the thermal imagers. On the night of 30/31 January the Saudi and Qatari forces (though they were largely Pakistanis serving in these units) moved up to their jump off points. Coalition aircraft had by this stage silenced most of the Iraqi armour foolish enough to be visible. They also bombed two divisions of Saddam’s 3rd Corps detected inside Kuwait gathering for a follow-on attack at Khafji. One strike by three American B-52 bombers reportedly destroyed 80 vehicles.

Anti-tank fire

Under cover of a supporting barrage the Saudis gained a lodgement in the southern end of the town. Inaccurate and sporadic small arms and

A vehicle destroyed during the Battle of Khafji

© Getty

An LAV-AT anti-tank missile carrier was destroyed by friendly anti-tank missile during the Battle of Khafji

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

Confident Saudi troops involved in the liberation of Khafji

© Getty

anti-tank fire greeted their attack. The Iraqis recovering from the first clash proved to be resilient and some of their remaining soldiers had to be cleared from the town's outlying buildings one by one. Nevertheless, in the chaos others quickly threw down their arms, perhaps realising they were cut off and that resistance was now futile.

The third day of fighting for Khafji lasted 12 hours. When eventually the Iraqi snipers had been silenced it was discovered the Iraqis had lost in and around the town at least 40 dead (some reports state as many as 300 and it is thought the Saudis may have played down the death toll), 35 wounded, 463 prisoners and up to 80 armoured vehicles. Several of Saddam's Chinese supplied APCs were found knocked out in the streets, lost either to the Coalition's fighter-bombers or artillery. The entire Iraqi garrison had been destroyed.

"ONE SAUDI ARMOURED VEHICLE WAS CREDITED WITH KNOCKING OUT EIGHT IRAQI TANKS"

Morale boost

First blood had gone to the Coalition forces and the SANG had given a good if patchy account of itself. Furthermore, the Coalition was able to heave a sigh of relief that the urban battlefield had not turned into a costly bloodbath and a media disaster. This proved a major morale boost for the untested Saudi armed forces and showed they could conduct themselves well. In three days the Saudi forces lost 18 killed and 32 wounded, three tanks and an anti-tank launcher. During that period according to the Saudis the Iraqis lost 11 tanks and 51 APCs destroyed and 19 APCs captured.

Although only a minor engagement in the overall scheme of things, Khafji echoed German attempts to move their armour to the Normandy bridgehead in 1944. If Saddam could have widened the battle by bringing up his follow-on forces and offered some token air cover the fight may not have gone so easily for the Coalition. It is possible the Americans would have had to divert more troops to help the Saudis, distracting them from the left hook. Without air support the Iraqis' offensive manoeuvring was totally compromised.

It was air power and artillery that were to dominate at Khafji and were a dominant feature of the whole campaign. Nonetheless, Saddam's seizure of Khafji before the Coalition was ready to conduct its ground offensive proved an embarrassing if brief setback

SCUD BUSTERS

Before the Coalition's ground offensive to liberate Kuwait commenced, Special Forces conducted dangerous missile-hunting missions inside Iraq

Aside from the dangers posed by Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons stockpiles, a particular threat faced by the Coalition's ground troops was his considerable arsenal of tactical ballistic missiles. These had successfully rained death and destruction down on Iran's cities during the bloody eight-year long Iran-Iraq War.

Coalition commanders were well aware of the threat posed by these missiles. As the Soviet-designed Scud was inaccurate, it was not really a viable military weapon, so Saddam once again resorted to using it as a terror weapon against civilian targets. During the Coalition build-up for Desert Storm/Desert Sabre, he harassed Saudi Arabia and Israel with repeated rocket and Scud missile attacks.

Saddam first fired his Soviet-made Scud B missiles at Iran in 1982; this culminated six years later in the 'War of the Cities' in which both sides fired hundreds of missiles at each other. The enormity of this should not be underestimated by anyone; Saddam's bombardment in 1988 caused 8,000 Iranian casualties and drove out a quarter of Tehran's population. A decade later Iran targeted Iranian opposition forces with missiles who were being sheltered by Saddam.

Saddam, by the time of the invasion of Kuwait, still had stocks of Scud B missiles plus his indigenously modified variants known as the Al-Abbas, Al-Hussien and Al-Hijarah. In the build-up to war 46 Scuds were fired at Saudi Arabia and another 40 at Israel. One particular strike against a barracks at Dhahran in Saudi killed 28 members of a US Army unit.

British special operations against Iraq were the responsibility of the 22nd Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment and their naval counterparts the Special Boat Squadron (SBS). The SAS deployed from their depots at Hereford, Cyprus and Oman. However, a few SAS members were already in Kuwait with the British Military Assistance Training team advising the Kuwaiti Army at the time of Saddam's invasion. They were able to provide invaluable intelligence on the local conditions.

The SAS, using their well-honed covert tactics, roamed the Iraqi army's rear areas in their Landrover Desert Patrol Vehicles, known as 'Pink Panthers' and their Longline Light Strike Vehicles. The SBS cooperated with the US Navy SEALs, who were given responsibility for raids into the Kuwait City area. Dramatically on 7 January 1991, US and British Special Forces penetrated an Iraqi air defence missile site and made off with a Soviet manufactured radar system.

The Coalition's combined air forces launched Operation Desert Storm round the clock in mid-January 1991, targeting Saddam's missile installations, lines of communication and his command and control centres. The

American Patriot missiles were used to shoot down Iraqi Scuds

F-117A stealth fighters of the US 37th Tactical Fighter Wing played a massive role in the Coalition's devastating air war against Iraq. In particular they were tasked to attack Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and command and control facilities.

While Iraq's air defences were considerable, RAF Tornado pilot Flight Lieutenant John Peters and his colleagues were also conscious of the threat from small arms. He recalled, "Since it takes very little wit to fire a gun into the air, Saddam Hussein's threat of creating 'lead walls' – curtains of fire for us happy chappies to fly into – had to be taken seriously."

Nonetheless air superiority over Kuwait and Iraq was achieved within just 24 hours of the first air attacks. The Iraqi Air Force lost almost 50 percent of its inventory, 141 aircraft were claimed destroyed on the ground, 35 in air-to air engagements, whilst 122 fled to Iran never to be returned. The national air defence system was quickly and efficiently smashed to pieces. The first salvo of sea-launched Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles or TLAMs were fired by the cruiser USS San Jacinto on 17 January 1991, followed by the attack submarines USS Pittsburgh and USS Louisville. In total 288 TLAMs were launched against Iraqi targets.

Despite the ferocity of Desert Storm and the Coalition's massed firepower, few of Saddam's Scuds were actually destroyed. Although Special Forces and Coalition pilots claimed up to 100 launchers, this figure was never substantiated. Many of those targeted proved to be lame ducks or decoys.

"THE F-117A STEALTH FIGHTERS OF THE US 37TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING PLAYED A MASSIVE ROLE IN THE COALITION'S DEVASTATING AIR WAR AGAINST IRAQ"

BRAVO TWO ZERO

A DARING BRITISH SCUD-BUSTING MISSION WENT HORRIBLY WRONG AND BECAME THE STUFF OF LEGEND

Special Forces in support of Desert Storm were tasked with not only gathering intelligence and to vector in air strikes, but also if necessary destroy Saddam's missile launchers themselves. One of the most well-known of these was the British SAS mission call-sign 'Bravo Two Zero'. Their task was to go Scud busting but the patrol was soon compromised and most of its members captured.

This operation was subsequently made famous by team member Steven Mitchell (using the pseudonym Andy McNab) who wrote a controversial book about their daring exploits. Later books by other team members conflicted with some details of Mitchell's account, leading to accusations of fabrication. McNab went on to become a highly successful novelist of both fiction and non-fiction.

Coalition troops inspect the remains of an Iraqi Scud missile

The aftermath of an Iraqi Scud missile attack in Tel Aviv, Israel, 24 January 1991

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A GLOBAL COALITION

Saddam Hussein's Iraq had to fight a truly international alliance of 36 contributing nations dominated by the United States

At the beginning of Operation Desert Storm, Iraq had – on paper – formidable armed forces. It had invaded Kuwait in 1990 with 100,000 men and in 1991 it mobilised all of its reserves that boosted numbers to over 600,000 troops. However, it faced a numerically and technically superior UN coalition that had been formed by the United Nations' Security Council Resolution 678 in November 1990. Dominated by the United States but including 36 countries, the Coalition was an overwhelmingly huge force of almost one million personnel, thousands of aircraft and tanks and hundreds of ships.

Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney meets with Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Saudi Arabia

"PERHAPS THE MOST SURPRISING ALLY WAS THE RECENTLY UNIFIED GERMANY"

One sense of the scale of the Coalition was the war's projected costs. The US Department of Defense estimated the cost at $61 million, with America's allies contributing approximately $54 million. Of the latter sum, the main contributors were Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, while Germany and Japan also provided substantial amounts of money.

In purely military terms, the Coalition was overwhelmingly American with almost 700,000 personnel. By comparison, the second and third biggest pools of manpower, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, contributed approximately 94,000 and 53,000 troops respectively. The Coalition threw together unlikely allies such as Argentina and Britain who had fiercely clashed during the Falklands War less than ten years before. Middle Eastern and Asian countries, some of whom would become heavily destabilised during the following two decades, also participated. Egypt and Morocco, who had been at war in the 1960s, combined forces while Syria provided approximately 21,000 troops. Even Afghanistan, which had only just concluded the Soviet-Afghan War, provided 300 Mujahideen fighters for the Coalition.

Most of the other Coalition allies provided military personnel that numbered in their hundreds with the smallest being Hungary who provided one 40-strong medical team. Perhaps the most surprising ally was the recently unified Germany. Although they were a major financial contributor, the Germans had not undertaken a military role since WWII. Nevertheless, a Bundeswehr Luftwaffe fighter squadron provided logistical support from Turkey, which quietly reintroduced Germany as a military power.

Coalition troops from Egypt, France, Oman, Syria and Kuwait stand for a review by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, 8 March 1991

A multinational group of aircraft from Qatar, France, Canada and the United States fly in formation during Operation Desert Storm

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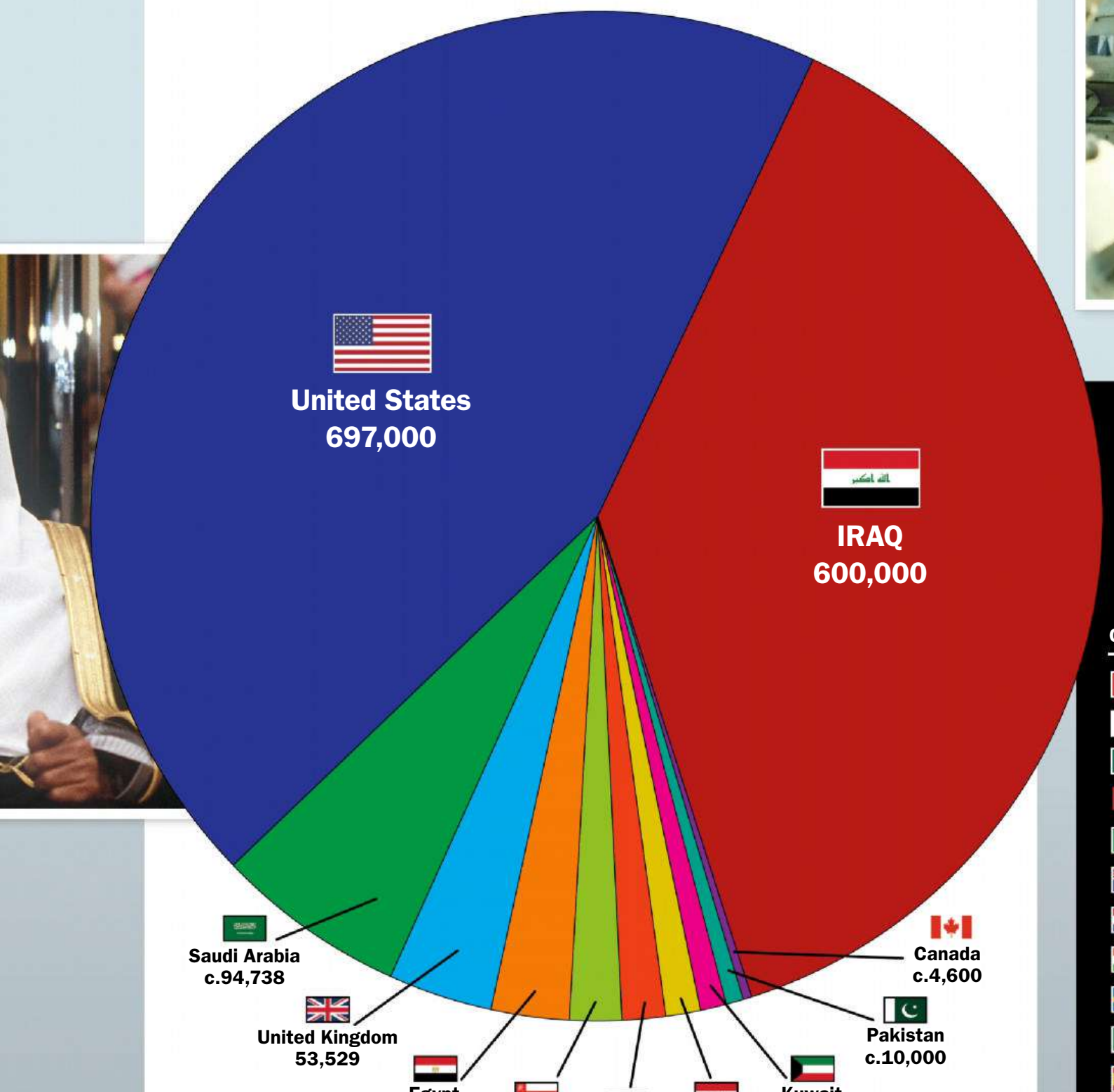
IRAQ VERSUS THE COALITION

THE MOST CONTRIBUTING ALLIED COUNTRIES THAT FOUGHT SADDAM'S FORCES



	PERSONNEL	TANKS	AIRCRAFT	SHIPS
IRAQ	600,000	c.1,900	300	c.33
UNITED STATES	697,000	2,000	1,940	271
SAUDI ARABIA	c.94,000	550	180	8
UNITED KINGDOM	53,000	455	58	16
EGYPT	c.40,000	400	0	0
OMAN	c.25,500	75	50	12
FRANCE	20,000	350	75	14
SYRIA	c.19,000	300	0	0
KUWAIT	11,500	0	35	0
PAKISTAN	c.10,000	0	0	0
CANADA	c.4,600	0	0	0

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Captured Iraqi tanks on show in Kuwait after the end of the Gulf War

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

COALITION'S OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

COUNTRY	
United Arab Emirates	4,300
Qatar	2,600
Bangladesh	2,300
Morocco	2,000
Italy	1,950
Australia	700
Netherlands	700
Niger	600
Sweden	525
Senegal	500
Spain	500
Argentina	450
Bahrain	400
Belgium	400
Czechoslovakia	350
Poland	319
South Korea	314
Afghanistan	300
Norway	280
Greece	200
Philippines	200
Honduras	150
Denmark	100
New Zealand	100
Germany	1 fighter squadron
Hungary	40

NAPOLEON IN EGYPT

WORDS **RENÉ WILKIN AND DR BERNARD WILKIN**

Before his rise to emperor, the young general sought glory in the land of the pharaohs – but at what cost?

The Battle of the Pyramids
by Antoine-Jean Gros

In the first months of 1798, 54,000 soldiers and sailors were gathered on the Mediterranean coast of the French Republic. More than 400 ships were gathered in Toulon and the nearby ports (Marseille, Ajaccio, Genoa and Civitavecchia). The destination was a well-kept secret. On 9 May, General Bonaparte published an address in which the destination was announced: Africa. Addressing his men, the general exclaimed, “Soldiers! You are one of the wings of the Army of England. You have made war in the mountains, plains and cities. We need to make it on the ocean. The Roman Legions, whom you have often imitated, but never yet equalled, combated Carthage, by turns, in the seas and on the plains of Zama. Victory never deserted their standards, because they never ceased to be brave, patient, and united. Soldiers, the eyes of Europe are upon you. You have great destinies to accomplish, battles to fight, dangers and fatigues to overcome. You are about to do more than you have yet done, for the prosperity of your country, the happiness of man, and for your own glory.”

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The expeditionary corps left Toulon on 19 May 1798. British ships, a major threat, were feared by French sailors in the region. A French officer, Charles François, wrote in his private diary on 8 June 1798, “This day, the captain of our ship told us that an English brick belonging to Nelson’s fleet was captured. The Admiral is pursuing us and is not far away.” Despite this, the French fleet managed to pursue its crossing without being intercepted.

On 10 June, the French army reached Malta, capturing the island without much difficulty. On 30 June, while at sea, Napoleon released another address to explain the expedition’s goal, “Soldiers, you are about to undertake a conquest the effects of which, on civilisation and commerce, are incalculable. The blow you are about to give to England will be the best aimed, the most sensibly felt, she can receive until the time arrives when you can give her her death-blow. We must make some fatiguing marches, we must fight several battles, we shall succeed in all we undertake. The destinies are with us.

“The Mameluke beys, who favour exclusively English commerce, whose extortions oppress our merchants, and who tyrannise over the unfortunate inhabitants of the Nile, a few days after our arrival will no longer exist. The people amongst whom we are going to live are Mahometans. The first article of their faith is this, ‘There is but one God and Mahomet is His prophet’. Do not contradict them. Behave to them as you behaved to the Jews, to the Italians. Pay respect to their muftis and their imams, as you did to the rabbis and the bishops. Extend to the ceremonies prescribed by the Koran and the mosques the same toleration which you showed to the synagogues, to the religion of Moses and of Jesus Christ. The Roman legions protect all religions. You will here find customs different from those of Europe. You must accommodate yourselves to them. The people amongst whom we are about to mix differ from us in the treatment of women; but in all countries he who violates is a monster. Pillage only enriches a small number of men; it dishonours us; it destroys our resources; it converts into enemies the people whom it is our interest to have for friends. The first town we shall come to was built by Alexander. At every step we shall meet with grand recollections, worthy of exciting the emulation of Frenchmen.”

Egypt had been in the hands of the Ottomans since 1517. At the time of the expedition, the region was in disorder. Capturing Egypt would have disturbed British trade, and undermine Britain’s access to India.

“THE BLOW YOU ARE ABOUT TO GIVE TO ENGLAND WILL BE THE BEST AIMED, THE MOST SENSIBLY FELT, SHE CAN RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIME ARRIVES WHEN YOU CAN GIVE HER HER DEATH-BLOW”

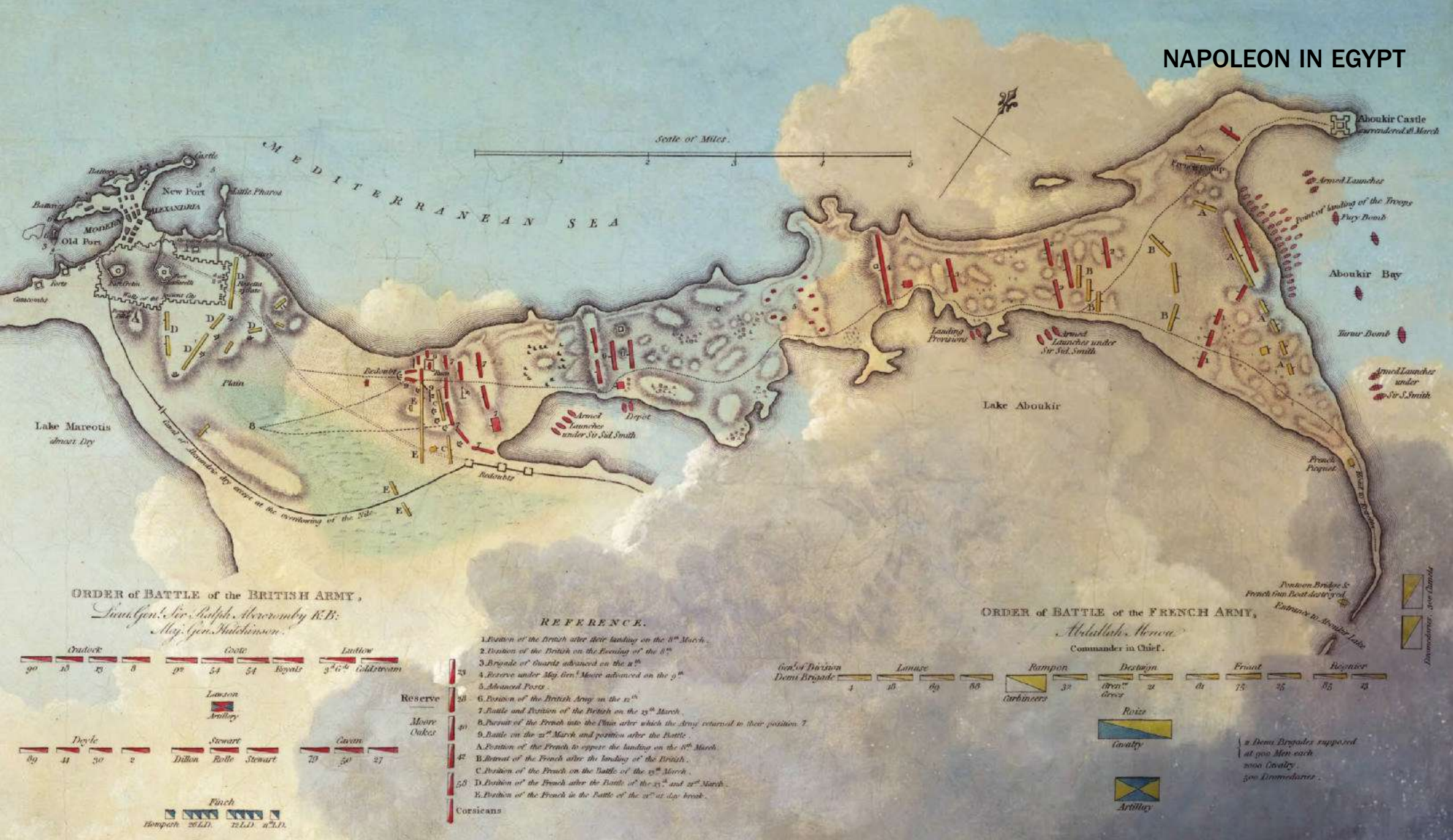
Landing in Egypt

On 1 July 1798, the expedition reached Alexandria without having encountered Nelson. A French translator, Pierre Jaubert, wrote from Aboukir the 8 July, “My dear Brother, we are, my dear Jaubert, in Egypt … The English fleet has been unlucky. It missed us near Sardinia and then missed the convoy from Civitavecchia, composed of 57 ships and carrying 7,000 men from Italy. It reached Malta five days after our departure and went to Alexandria, we thought that we would land there to invade India.”

On 2 July, the city was captured easily by the French, but General Kléber, one of Bonaparte’s main commanders, was wounded. Villers du Terrage explained, “Our troops landed two miles west from the city. On the evening of 13 messidor [the tenth month in the French Republican Calendar], we had to fight hard. General Kléber suffered a head wound and General Menou was wounded several times. A few officers and men, taken by surprise alone, were killed by the Arabs. Losses were heavy and equal on both sides. According to various reports, each side lost 150 men.”

After the fall of Alexandria, the expedition took the direction of Cairo. A fleet carrying supplies and food followed the Nile river while the army crossed the desert of Damanhur. This was the shortest way, but weather conditions were, for French soldiers used to the European climate, hard to endure. Dehydration, Bedouins and starvation killed several men. On 10 July, at Chebreiss, the invading army encountered the Mamelukes, the rulers of Egypt, for the first time. The French fleet was attacked by Egyptian ships supported by 4,000 Mamelukes. The French won this first encounter but the undeterred Mamelukes continued to harass French columns. It is during this time that Bonaparte’s soldiers used the infantry square formation to protect themselves against attack.

On 21 July, the French reached the pyramids. Next to this impressive sight stood 6,000 enemy horsemen, ready for battle, and their commander Mourad Bey. Bonaparte, pointing at the pyramids, said, “From these pyramids, 4,000 years of civilisation look down on us.” Captain François described the result of the following battle, “The Mamelukes lost 3,000 men, killed on the battlefield, but not including the 2,000 others who drowned in the Nile River. They lost 40 cannons, 400 camels, their crews, a great number of horses, etc. The bounty was immense as Mamelukes, like other Orientals, carried in battles their finest clothes, their best weapons, almost all decorated with silver and beautiful jewellery. A few soldiers found on Mamelukes’ bodies belts of 600 to 1,500 marabouts, gold coins worth six pounds nine in



ORDER of BATTLE of the BRITISH ARMY,

Lieu.t Gen.l Sir Ralph Abercromby K.B:
Maj. Gen. Hutchinson.

REFERENCE.

1. *Position of the British after their landing on the 8th March.*
2. *Position of the British on the Evening of the 8th*
3. *Brigade of Guards advanced on the 11th*
4. *Reserve under Maj. Gen.l Moore advanced on the 9th*
5. *Advanced Posts.*
6. *Position of the British Army on the 12th*
7. *Battle and Position of the British on the 13th March.*
8. *Pursuit of the French into the Plain after which the Army returned to their position 7.*
9. *Battle on the 21st March and position after the Battle.*
A. *Position of the French to oppose the landing on the 8th March.*
B. *Retreat of the French after the landing of the British.*
C. *Position of the French on the Battle of the 13th March.*
D. *Position of the French after the Battle of the 13th and 21st March.*
E. *Position of the French in the Battle of the 21st at day break.*

ORDER of BATTLE of the FRENCH ARMY,

Abdallah Menou
Commander in Chief.

***Above:** A plan of the preparations of the British Forces in Egypt from the landing in Aboukir Bay before the Battle of Alexandria*

The Battle Of Alexandria *by Philip James de Loutherbourg*

Images: Wiki / PD / CC

France. As for me, I took a beautiful chiselled sword, the scabbard in gold-plated silver, a pair of silver pistols, three pieces of Kashmir silk and a belt in which I found 460 gold coins. Having taken these goods on the battlefield, we followed the enemy until nine in the evening."

On 22 July, the notable citizens of Cairo surrendered the city to Bonaparte. General Desaix was ordered to chase Bey Mourad across Upper Egypt, while Ibrahim Bey burned his own fleet to prevent its capture, before retreating to Syria. However, bad news reached Bonaparte. The British fleet of Admiral Nelson had located them and was now blocking the French fleet in the port of Abukir. The French commander did not stay idle. He supervised the administration of Cairo and organised the defence of the Nile delta. Each province was supervised by a French superior officer. Egyptians did not welcome the French presence and the country remained unsafe for soldiers of the Republic.

The conquest of Upper Egypt and the Syrian expedition

While Bonaparte was in Cairo, Desaix was following Mourad Bey with 3,000 men across Upper Egypt. He defeated him at the battle of Sediman on 7 October 1798 and crushed his lieutenants in two other encounters. Following these victories, Bonaparte left for Syria. Desaix was recalled in Lower Egypt to replace him and bring back order. Indeed, other French Generals were fighting for power, leaving the occupied territories in a dangerous state of paralysis. This lack of discipline triggered an Egyptian insurrection, cutting off Bonaparte's supply line.

During this time, the French occupation was not without cruelty. Vivant Denon, a French scientist brought alongside the expedition, recalled the following episode, "One of our men, badly wounded, reached a dying Mameluke and slit his throat. An officer asked him how, in his state, he could act so horribly. The other answered that having only moments to live, he wanted to enjoy life a little bit more."

The Ottoman Sultan soon decided to send two armies to Egypt: one by land through Syria, the other brought by the British fleet toward Alexandria. Bonaparte wanted to crush the first army in Syria before the other had time to land. He organised a force of around 13,000 soldiers, including the newly-created camel company. He occupied without difficulty El-Arich, Gaza and Jaffa. To terrorise the enemy, Jaffa, captured on 7 March after having valiantly resisted, was pillaged as the 3,500 men who had defended the city were executed.

On 19 March, the French besieged Acre. However, the British captured the supporting French fleet. From Damascus, a rescuing army was sent to help Acre. Small detachments led by Kléber, Murat and Junot were dispatched to stop the rescuing force.

"AN OFFICER ASKED HIM HOW, IN HIS STATE, HE COULD ACT SO HORRIBLY. THE OTHER ANSWERED THAT HAVING ONLY MOMENTS TO LIVE, HE WANTED TO ENJOY LIFE A LITTLE BIT MORE"

On 8 April, Junt crushed the enemy vanguard at Nazareth while Kléber and his 2,000 men engaged the main army near Kana. Encircled by 25,000 enemy horsemen, he was rescued by Bonaparte. Two days later, the remaining Turkish army was destroyed by Murat. The French returned to Acre, still resisting the

Admiral Joachim Murat during the Battle of Aboukir. Painting by Antoine Jean Gros

invader. The city was defended by Governor Jezzar Pascha, the French émigré Phélippeaux and British Colonel Douglas. British ships, deployed by Sir Sidney Smith, provided artillery fire from the sea. Captain François, in his diary, gave an overview of the situation on 19 March 1799, "The army is positioned in front of Acre. The enemy – an infernal fire from the city walls and the towers. The English – from their ships the Thesme and the Tiger. A few Druze asked our general-in-chief for his protection and help. They were particularly useful and served us loyally during our siege of Acre. They informed us that the city held two men worth a Muslim army. One was Sidney Smith, commander of the English division, the other was named Phélippeaux, a Frenchman, former artillery officer, well-versed in how to use artillery. Those two men were leading the defence of Acre."

Finally, after several unsuccessful assaults, the French army, tired and decimated by a plague epidemic, abandoned the siege. Bonaparte, to prevent his weaker soldiers from being captured and tortured, had them poisoned. The French army, while retreating, destroyed the fortifications of Jaffa, burned houses and harvests. The expedition of Syria had been launched to stop the arrival of Ottoman reinforcements. Bonaparte reached this goal, but lost 2,200 men during the campaign, a heavy toll for an army unable to receive any reinforcement. While the French commander-in-chief was away, the British fleet had landed with 18,000 janissaries at Abukir. Bonaparte attacked them on 25 July with 6,000 soldiers. Generals Lannes, Murat and Destaing took by surprise 3,000 janissaries, who were all killed. The others were pushed back to the sea. Their commander, Mustapha Pacha, was captured. At the same time, the British fleet of Nelson destroyed entirely the French fleet in the Abukir port at the battle of the Nile.

Return to France

Following an exchange of prisoners with the British, Bonaparte received French newspapers from Sidney Smith. While reading them, he learned that the situation at home was volatile. He took the decision to secretly leave for France with a few trusted friends. General Kléber, an Alsatian, was put in charge of the army of Egypt. A competent administrator, he faced enormous difficulties, including demoralised French soldiers, who had felt betrayed by Bonaparte's decision to depart.

On 24 January 1800, Kléber signed a repatriation convention with Sydney Smith. The whole French expeditionary corps was supposed to embark for France. The British Government, however, refused to ratify the convention. As a consequence, war resumed, and the people of Cairo rose against the occupier. On 20 March 1800, General Kléber won the Battle of Heliopolis against the Turks and the British. Several Coptic Greeks enlisted in the French army.

On 14 June 1800, Kléber was murdered by a Syrian student named Soleyman El Halabi. Captain François, in his diary, wrote that on 14 June 1800, "A man dressed like an Oriental, came out of an alley and pretended to kiss Kléber's hand. While the general was reaching for him, the man stabbed our general. He leaned against the wall and screamed 'I am being murdered!'. He fell on the floor, the heart pierced. Protain, an architect, who was only equipped with a stick, jumped on the Turkish man, who was standing still next to his victim. After a short brawl, the architect was also stabbed and passed out next to the general. The miserable murderer, set free, came back to the general's body and stabbed him three more times. Hearing footsteps, he ran to hide in the garden." Caught and judged by a military commission, he was put to death in horrible conditions. General Menou explained in a letter that "the commission, having concluded

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NAPOLEON IN EGYPT

Bonaparte And His Chief Of Staff In Egypt, ***painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme***

Image: Wiki / PD / CC

18+

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Napoleon gained favour by visiting the plague-stricken in Jaffa. Painting by Antoine Jean Gros

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the trial, found it relevant to follow Egyptian customs. He was impaled after his right hand had been burned".

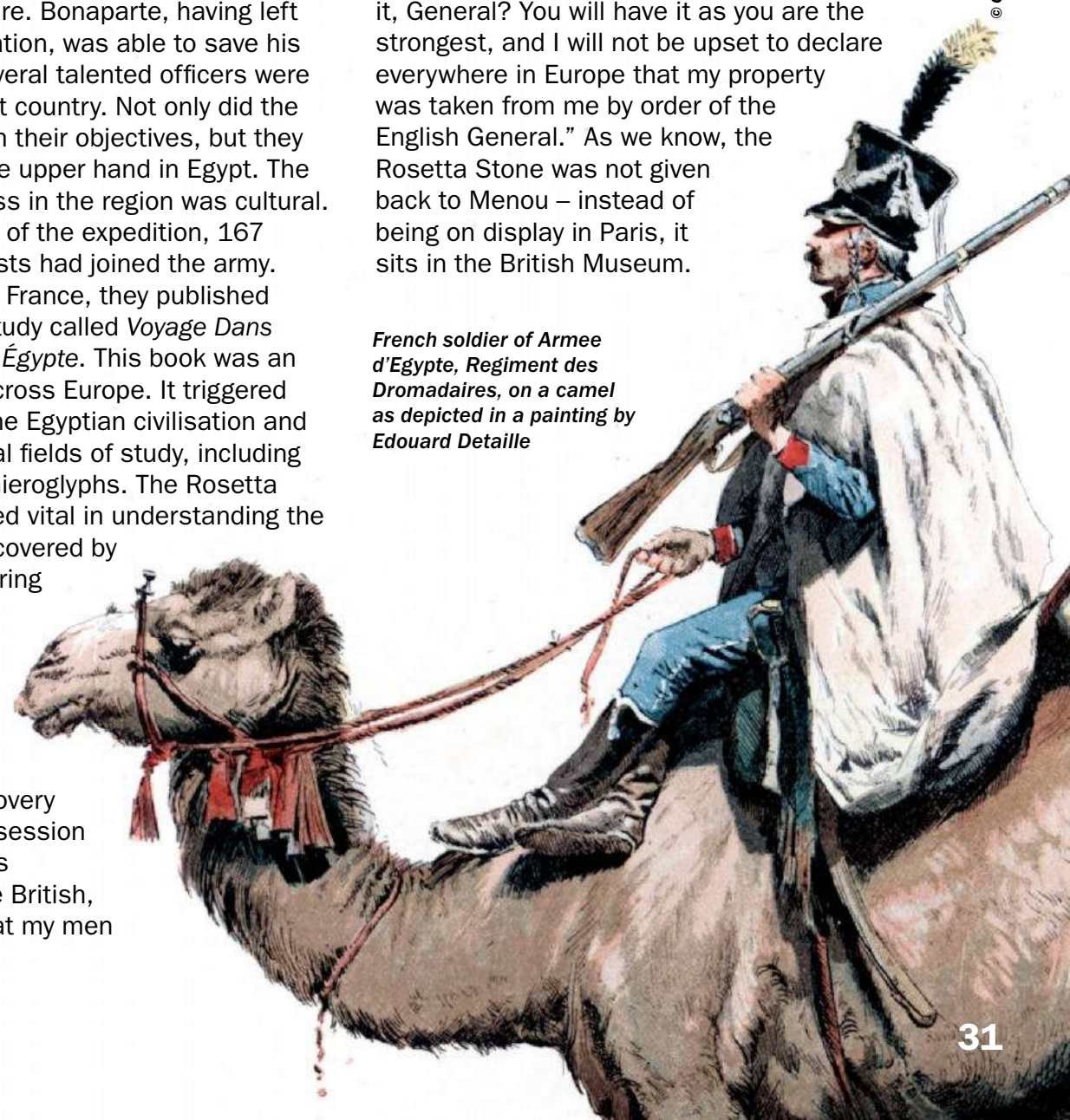
The new commander-in-chief was General Jacques Menou, who had become a Muslim after falling in love with a woman from Cairo. The general had even changed his name to Abdallah Menou. Unlike his predecessor, Menou was not a talented administrator or military leader, and under his command the situation became quickly critical. Menou was beaten at the Battle of Canopy on 21 March 1801. General Belliard, who was defending Cairo, surrendered on 25 June 1801 and Menou surrendered at Alexandria, effectively signalling the end of the French expedition.

French prisoners were brought back to France on British ships, as agreed on the convention signed on 27 June 1801 by General Belliard, General Hope and Osman Bey, "Article one. The French Corps of the French land and sea armies, the auxiliary troops, will evacuate the city of Cairo, the citadel, the forts of Bulak and Gizeh, and all the occupied parts of Egypt. Article two. The French Corps of the French army and the auxiliary troops will retire from Rosetta and following the left bank of the Nile River, with their equipment, artillery and ammunitions, to be embarked and transported in French ports of the Mediterranean sea. This will be done as soon as possible but at the latest 50 days after the ratification of the present convention."

Counting the cost

Despite brilliant victories on the field, there is no doubt that the French expedition in Egypt was a military failure. Bonaparte, having left before the capitulation, was able to save his reputation, but several talented officers were killed in the distant country. Not only did the French fail to reach their objectives, but they gave the British the upper hand in Egypt. The only French success in the region was cultural.

At the beginning of the expedition, 167 scientists and artists had joined the army. Having returned to France, they published in 1802 a major study called *Voyage Dans La Basse Et Haute Égypte*. This book was an instant success across Europe. It triggered a fascination for the Egyptian civilisation and encouraged several fields of study, including attempts to read hieroglyphs. The Rosetta Stone, which proved vital in understanding the language, was discovered by French soldiers during the campaign. General Menou, in a letter to General Hutchinson, tried to present the archeological discovery as a personal possession in order to avoid its confiscation by the British, "I own a stone, that my men discovered in Rosette, which bears three types of writing. It was mine, but I wanted to offer it to the Republic upon my return. Do you want it, General? You will have it as you are the strongest, and I will not be upset to declare everywhere in Europe that my property was taken from me by order of the English General." As we know, the Rosetta Stone was not given back to Menou – instead of being on display in Paris, it sits in the British Museum.



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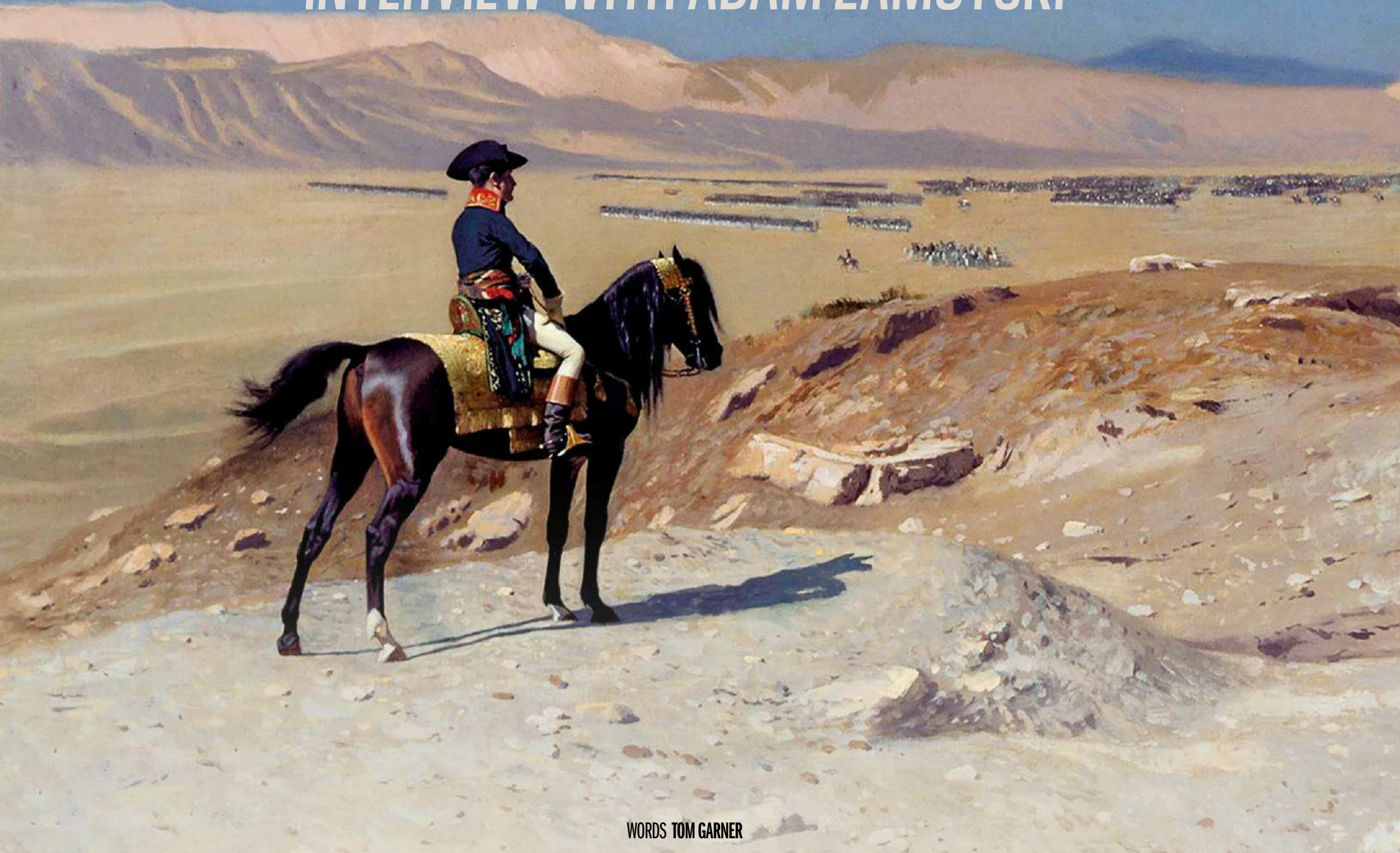
French soldier of Armee d'Egypte, Regiment des Dromadaires, on a camel as depicted in a painting by Edouard Detaille

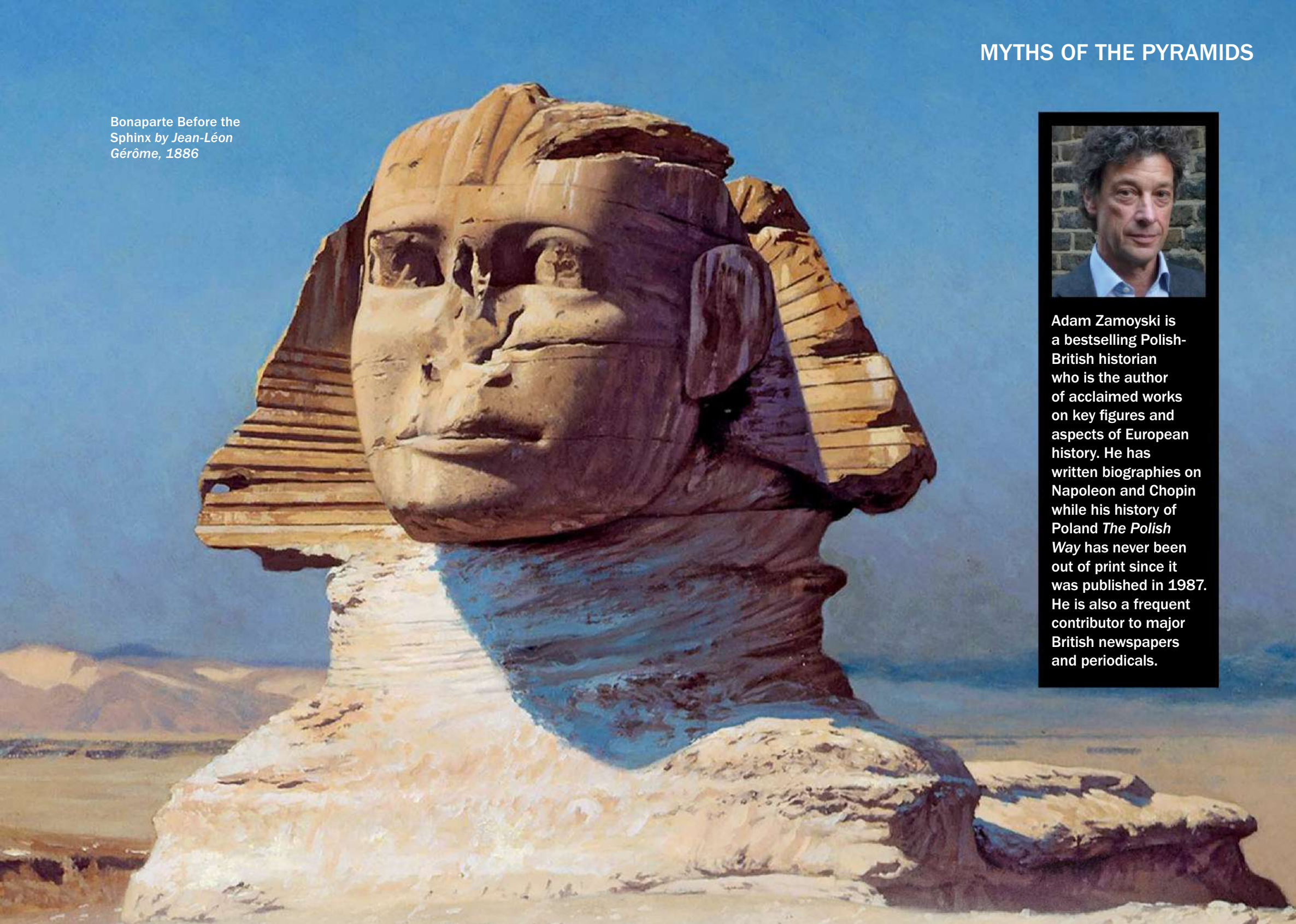
MYTHS OF THE PYRAMIDS

INTERVIEW WITH ADAM ZAMOYSKI



WORDS **TOM GARNER**

The eminent expert on the Napoleonic era debunks the legends surrounding the French campaign in the Orient, and discusses what impact it had on the future emperor's life



Bonaparte Before the Sphinx *by Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1886*

Adam Zamoyski is a bestselling Polish-British historian who is the author of acclaimed works on key figures and aspects of European history. He has written biographies on Napoleon and Chopin while his history of Poland *The Polish Way* has never been out of print since it was published in 1987. He is also a frequent contributor to major British newspapers and periodicals.

Between 1798-99, Napoleon Bonaparte experienced one of the most dramatic campaigns in his long military career. Then a general in the French Army, he led an invasion of Egypt and a subsequent campaign into Syria and Palestine that propelled his career to new heights. His time in the Middle East has since been viewed as an intoxicating blend of heroic romance and huge bloodshed, that was ultimately a costly adventure.

For Adam Zamoyski, a bestselling author of Napoleonic history, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign was a crucial episode that set him on the path to ruling France. However, he also believes that Napoleon's role, motives and actions during this experience have been misunderstood. Zamoyski reveals a confident young Napoleon who was ambitious and occasionally ruthless but also idealistic, religiously tolerant and hungry for both knowledge and power.

A chance for glory

Despite the fame that Napoleon gained in Egypt, the plan for the campaign reflected his less powerful position in 1798, "Invading Egypt wasn't his idea and he wasn't emperor of France – he was just a general. It was the French government – the Directory – whose decision it was to send him to Egypt and they did this for two reasons," Zamoyski explains.

"[First], France had lost her Caribbean colonies to Britain and was short of colonial goods. It seemed a good idea to replace these western colonies, which they had no way of recapturing, by taking Egypt. They thought it could supply all of the same produce and was far closer to home in the Mediterranean Sea, which they largely controlled. If France could take Egypt she might be able to resupply and indeed reconquer the former colonies they had lost. It would also threaten Britain's position in India, which the French reckoned accounted for a large percentage of its global power.

"There was also the need to get rid of General Bonaparte. He had not only captured approximately one half of Italy and thrown the Austrians back, but also managed to negotiate a peace. This was appreciated by a war-weary French population and he had created the image of himself in a marvellous propaganda machine as the absolute dashing hero.

"The Directory in Paris was extremely unpopular and had opponents on both the left and right who were waiting for a general who could lead a coup for them and overthrow it. They also wanted to get Bonaparte away from Paris so sending him off to Egypt was extremely convenient."

Removing Napoleon from French politics may have been expedient for the Directory but the young general was keen to go, "Once the project had been mooted he became very excited. It appealed to his sense of the epic, of adventure and it was extremely exciting from a military point of view. It also reeked of antiquity and Napoleon's heroes were very much people like Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Therefore, marching into Egypt was very appealing."

The Pyramids and Cairo

Once the French Army embarked from Toulon in May 1798 with tens of thousands of soldiers, Napoleon sailed for a country that he anticipated would provide him with opportunities for blazing success. He wrote, "I haven't had enough glory. This tiny Europe doesn't provide enough, so I must go east." Once he arrived in Egypt, Napoleon soon won a famous victory at the Battle of Pyramids, at Embabeh, on 21 July 1798, against an Ottoman Mameluke army.

Fought approximately 15 kilometres from (but in sight of) the Pyramids of Giza, the engagement was a propaganda coup for the French. However, Zamoyski does not rate the battle among Napoleon's great victories, "It's an odd one because he simply adopted the 'square' formation and just let his superior firepower deal with the enemy. He was bound to win so long as the squares held, which they did. There was nothing spectacular about it but it was a very effective, economical battle.

"A much more spectacular but smaller engagement was the Battle of Abukir, which

was his last battle on Egyptian soil. He really did deploy very well there and efficiently. At a tiny cost he effectively destroyed an Egyptian army, whose casualties were well over 10,000 but his were about 250. He was very proud of that."

Nevertheless, the Battle of the Pyramids enabled the French to enter Cairo. Despite the fact that the Royal Navy had destroyed the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile during 1-3 August 1798, Napoleon began to govern Egypt as its de-facto ruler, "Bonaparte was cut off from France and on his own. He suddenly found himself to be an autonomous ruler of a huge country and was no longer taking orders because none came."

Napoleon thrived on his new power, "He was a child of the Enlightenment and believed in order, progress and technology but he was also something of a control-freak. He loved 'civilising' Egypt but suddenly saw himself in epic terms," Zamoyski continues. "Here he was being a kind of Alexander the Great and he was only 28 years old. It was suddenly his army and Egypt was his country. He had absolutely free rein – everything about the place was exciting and exotic and he'd get carried away.

"He would start talking in epic terms and there are marvellous quotations. After a revolt in Cairo he gathered all the local dignitaries and said, 'Everything I undertake must come to pass'. In other proclamations he wrote, 'Those who declare that they are my friends shall prosper. Those that declare themselves my enemies perish' or 'I am as terrible as the fire of heaven to my enemies. Clement and merciful to the people and those who wish to be my friend'."

Zamoyski explains that although these statements of power sound melodramatic, Napoleon was not necessarily exaggerating, "It slightly went to his head but one has to be careful about applying modern standards. It's been pointed out by a number of academics that the extraordinary language that developed the French Revolution was all in superlatives. The French were forging a 'New World', a 'New Destiny' and if you read the revolutionary texts it is all couched in these amazing terms. They simply became part of the language. To us, it sounds as though Napoleon was talking gibberish and had been out in the sun for too long but actually he was just speaking in the idiom of the day."

Furthermore, Napoleon's Enlightenment ideals were genuine, which was reflected in his willing toleration of Islam, "His religious tolerance has been very much downplayed," Zamoyski continues. "He was attached to elements of his Catholic upbringing but he was essentially a non-believer. Like most children of the Enlightenment he didn't really believe in the mystical aspects of religion but believed in the essential 'function' of religion as an absolute pillar of social order.

"He was no bigot and in many ways he was interested in Islam because he deemed it to be non-hierarchical. He thought one of the problems with Christianity, particularly Catholicism, was that it had become far too hierarchical. He was struck by what he saw as a much more open religion in Islam. He was essentially a very tolerant person who didn't particularly want to disturb the social order."

Disaster in the Levant

Although the military operations in Egypt and Napoleon's administration from Cairo have become famous, he led a further campaign into Palestine and Syria in February 1799. According to Zamoyski, French diplomatic incompetence had earned the wrath of the Ottoman Empire, which ostensibly ruled Egypt, "The expedition had been undermined. When the Directory sent Napoleon to Egypt the French foreign minister, Talleyrand, told him that he would travel to Constantinople [Istanbul] to explain the situation to the sultan [Selim III]. By this stage, the sultan had pretty much lost control of Egypt, which was effectively ruled by Mameluke beys who sent him a bit of tribute and that was about it. The idea was that the French would explain to the sultan that they would recognise his overlordship, pay more money and basically develop something that would be a win-win situation.

"However, Talleyrand didn't even bother to send a letter and so the sultan suddenly got news that the French had invaded one of his colonies. This understandably annoyed him

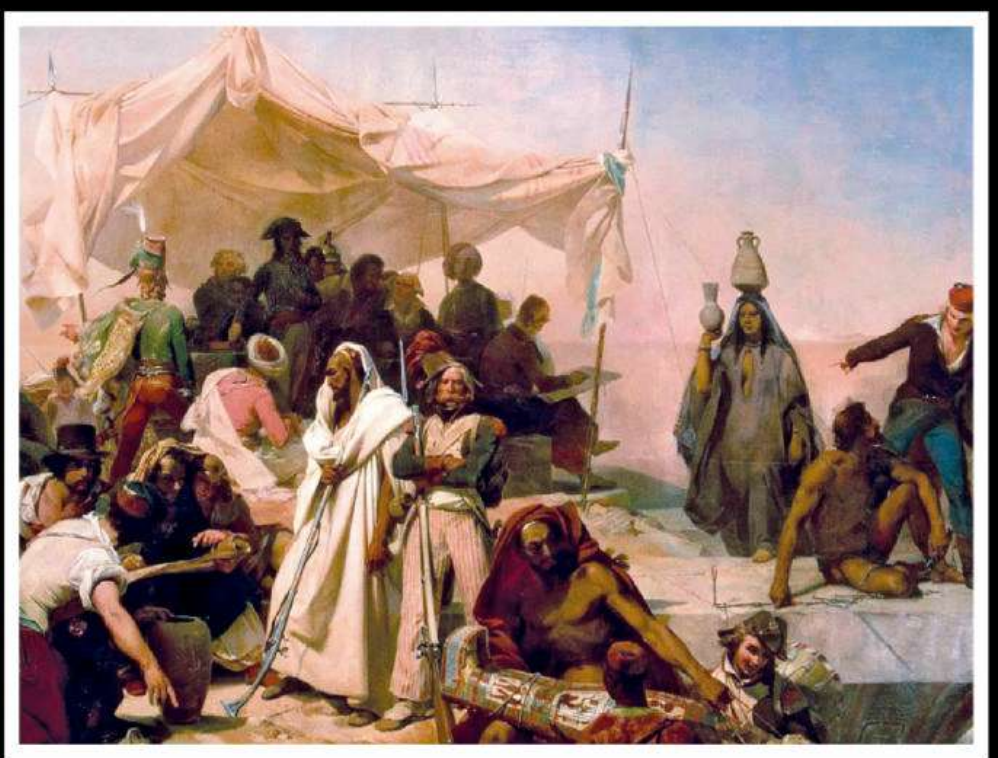
SUPPORTING THE 'SAVANTS'

Napoleon was a keen advocate for the scientific aspect of his expedition whose members made remarkable discoveries in Egypt

The scientific expedition that accompanied the French Army to Egypt has been celebrated for its discoveries. Over 160 scientists and scholars (known as the 'savants') were selected to study everything there was to find out about Egypt. Their achievements included biological discoveries, technical archaeological drawings and revealing the secrets of mirages. However, the most spectacular result was the discovery of the Rosetta Stone by Pierre-François Bouchard. This find enabled Egyptian hieroglyphics to be read for the first time in centuries and was the birth of modern Egyptology.

Zamoyski states that this unique aspect of the campaign was advocated by Napoleon himself, "He would often discuss the fact that while people knew about Ancient Greece and Rome, almost nothing was known about Ancient Egypt. He thought it would be marvellous to rediscover and document the ancient civilisation and also study the whole area, which was not so far away from France and historically important."

Zamoyski believes that Napoleon's thirst for knowledge resulted from his poor childhood education, "He had a genuine scientific interest and was fascinated by everything. Like a lot of people who hadn't been schooled properly he educated himself assiduously. He had a slight complex about this and was always trying to prove himself – even though he was far better read and knowledgeable than most of his educated contemporaries. He very much saw himself as a patron of art and science throughout his life and indeed as a trailblazer, which he was."



Napoleon oversees the expedition's scientists from a tent while Egyptian workers carry finds from an archaeological dig

The Battle of Mount Tabor was a dramatic French victory where Napoleon's forces killed 6,000 Ottoman troops at the cost of only two fatalities

NELSON AND NAPOLEON

Although Britain's famous admiral destroyed the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, Napoleon bore no responsibility for the disaster

The Battle of the Nile was one of Horatio Nelson's most famous naval victories. At the cost of no British ships, Nelson's fleet captured nine French ships along with over 3,000 POWs. 2,000-5,000 French sailors became casualties and four more ships were destroyed including the flagship Orient, which dramatically exploded.

The Nile was a disaster for the French but Zamoyski is clear that Napoleon was not to blame, "It wasn't his responsibility because he was not there. He had told the French admiral [François-Paul Brueys d'Agialliers] to take his fleet into Alexandria or go off to the Ionian Islands to refit and keep out of the way. However, Brueys didn't want to get his ships into Alexandria's harbour because it had a very narrow entrance. He thought he might get stuck there, which was sensible enough. Brueys also didn't go to the Ionian Islands because he was afraid that Napoleon's army might potentially need to be evacuated. He thought he'd better hang around but he anchored his fleet very badly. Brueys made it very easy for Nelson to destroy the fleet so you can't blame Napoleon at all."

Nelson was a formidable opponent of Napoleon's and recognised the French general's ability. After the Battle of the Nile, Nelson found some of Napoleon's personal correspondence and wrote of his rival's ambitions, "He does want and will strive to be, the [George] Washington of France." However, unlike the Duke of Wellington, Zamoyski argues that Napoleon's views on Nelson were not so considered, "I don't think he ever gave Nelson much thought. He just knew that the Royal Navy was superior to the French Navy but everyone knew that and I don't think he had any thoughts on Nelson himself."

The Destruction Of L'orient At The Battle Of The Nile by George Arnald. This famous painting was first exhibited in 1827

The Battle of Abukir was Napoleon's last battle in Egypt and his victory temporarily secured French control over the country

and the Battle of the Nile removed all French influence from the eastern Mediterranean. The sultan was then quite happy to make an alliance with Britain."

Selim III planned to recapture Egypt by sending two Ottoman armies – one by sea to Abukir and the other overland through Syria. With this new threat, Napoleon took the initiative, "He used his usual tactic of striking first to knock out one force and then turn on the other. He thought, 'Let's march up to Syria and knock out that force and move that large part of the Syrian population and Palestine against the Ottomans'. They were very unhappy with the sultan's rule and if the French could knock out the Ottoman force they might be able to take Damascus. At this point the sultan would have to find peace with France, accept French rule in Syria and close his ports to the British."

Zamoyski believes that Napoleon's plan was bold but that he was undone at the Siege of Acre during March-May 1799, "It would have been an absolute masterstroke but everything went horribly wrong because Napoleon couldn't take Acre. He got completely stuck there and although he tried very hard it was a good fortress. It was being resupplied by the Royal Navy and Napoleon had to retreat. He did manage to defeat the Ottoman force at the Battle of Mount Tabor but he didn't manage to advance any further. He had to go back to Egypt because the Ottoman force that had travelled by sea could potentially catch him in the back."

The campaign into Palestine and Syria became notorious for the terrible conditions the French endured, "It was a disastrous campaign from a strategic point of view and Napoleon marched off at the head of an effectively rabble army. Most of his generals were older and more experienced than him and people like General [Jean-Baptiste] Kléber disliked him intensely and couldn't understand why they had to serve under him. The French had nearly died of thirst crossing Sinai and got into a battle of attrition at Acre. They then trudged back in terrible heat and drought with a lot of the soldiers becoming sick."

Napoleon's defeat at Acre was also preceded by a deeply controversial massacre of Ottoman prisoners who were captured at the Siege of Jaffa in early March 1799. His decision to kill approximately 2,000 prisoners caused outrage, "When the French took over the prisoners at Jaffa they couldn't guard or feed them nor spare the men to bring them back to Cairo. Most of the prisoners had broken their parole because they had capitulated to Napoleon before and sworn not to bear arms. Napoleon decided to kill them and most of his generals were aghast but he was adamant."

The massacre introduced a ruthless pragmatism in Napoleon's method of leadership, "It showed his generals that he not only meant business but had the capacity to make unpopular decisions and carry them out. Even Kléber had to admit, 'This fellow has this extraordinary gift. He dares and he dares to dare'. These discontented generals came to realise that this guy was actually a leader and their only chance to get out of this mess."

While he was still in Jaffa, Napoleon also visited plague-stricken French soldiers in a hospital. This famous act of compassion was at odds with the massacre he had ordered but Zamoyski considers that Napoleon's actions were not hypocritical, "I think it was consistent with his personality because he was never gratuitously cruel. He could get carried away and issue some hard orders but he would usually revoke them shortly afterwards when his rage died down. He would also occasionally hit somebody but he would always apologise and make amends. He was not a cruel or indeed a bloodthirsty man, and the idea of him being a monster is completely out of order.

"Visiting the plague victims at Jaffa was very possibly dictated by the need to show his men and surgeons to not be afraid. The orderlies did not want to touch the victims but Napoleon apparently squeezed the pus out of a bubo and showed them how to do it. Whether it's true or not, the story went around the ranks, gave them huge comfort and enhanced Napoleon's image. It also showed that he was leading from the front but he could be extremely compassionate and even sentimental at times."

A returning 'saviour'

Napoleon returned to Egypt after months of campaigning in Syria and Palestine. Although he won the Battle of Abukir on 25 July 1799 he left the country only weeks later to return

Left: Napoleon in Cairo. His administration of Egypt was the first time that he held independent power as a ruler

Napoleon's popularity following his Egyptian adventure significantly aided his successful, bloodless coup d'état against the French Directory on 9 November 1799

to France. On 23 August a proclamation was read to his army that Napoleon had transferred command to General Kléber.

His incognito departure has often been viewed as an uncaring abandonment that left his army stranded in Egypt but Napoleon had good reasons to return, "His reasoning was that he was getting bad news from France. The anti-French coalition had been very successful by throwing the French out of Italy and it looked very possible that they might overthrow the French Republic. Napoleon believed in the Republic and also knew that if it was overthrown his career would take quite a knock. He felt he ought to go and defend France.

"What he didn't know was that the Directory had actually sent him orders to come back with as many troops as he could. Quite how they expected him to do that after the Battle of the Nile I don't know but they had sent him the letter with orders to return, which he didn't get. Although he returned on his own initiative he was actually acting in the interests of the French Republic."

The remains of the French Army in Egypt stayed until 1801 when they were repatriated after the Siege of Alexandria. However, Napoleon did not simply leave them to their fate, "The army he left behind was perfectly well supplied and unthreatened because he had just defeated the second Ottoman-Egyptian army at Abukir. There was no immediate threat and he wasn't leaving them in the lurch – he simply delegated command to another general. Anti-Napoleonic propaganda made much of, 'A general does not leave an army in the field' but that's not how Napoleon saw it.

"He certainly didn't leave his army in peril or undermine its position by leaving. At first, the news came as a shock but the soldiers quickly realised why he had done it. Also, one of the first things he did when he achieved power in France was to resupply the army, which the Directory had failed to do. It wasn't like he 'dumped' his army and forgot about it. He was definitely acting in the interests of the French Republic and, unbeknownst to him, the wishes of his government."

The French campaigns in Egypt, Syria and Palestine had come at a huge cost. Total French losses by 1801 came to at least 17,000, a further 23,000 repatriations and the annihilation of their fleet. This is without taking into consideration the far greater Ottoman and Egyptian casualties and the ultimate collapse of the French administration in Egypt. This was in many ways a military disaster but it was not considered like that at the time. Napoleon was in fact greeted with great enthusiasm, "It didn't look a failure to the average Frenchman. Napoleon had captured Egypt for France and had won several victories. The news of Abukir reached Paris about a week before Napoleon himself arrived so he was greeted as a hero. Notwithstanding the Battle of the Nile and Acre, the whole venture did not look like a failure because he'd gained a colony for France."

Such was the acclamation for Napoleon that Egypt actually helped with his successful coup against the Directory in November 1799 that set him on the road to eventually becoming emperor, "When he disembarked there were extraordinary accounts of people stopping what they were doing, rushing out for joy and literally calling him a saviour. The Directory was now extremely unpopular and one of the directors even planned a coup against his own government just to topple it."There was a constitutional logjam where the Directory was mired in corruption and blamed for everything. Suddenly there was this brilliant man who had come back and people thought, 'What is needed is a soldier who will clear up this mess'. That's exactly what happened with Napoleon who planned the coup very cleverly and largely let others carry it out for him."

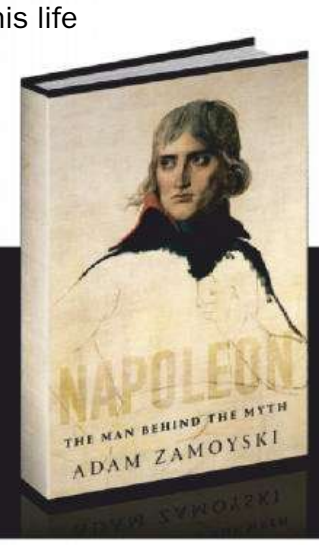
"The most ideal" experience

In a long, momentous career, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign stood out as one of the most vivid episodes and left a lasting impression. He later told one of Empress Joséphine's ladies-in-waiting, "The time I spent in Egypt was one of the most delightful in my life because it was the most ideal."

Zamoyski believes that Napoleon's nostalgia for Egypt was based on its personal importance, "It was almost a 'romantic' moment – not in the sense of romance but of huge visions. He was at the beginning of the Romantic movement and was very much swayed by heroic literature and the campaign was so exotic. Egypt was outside Europe and had a different climate and feeling. I think he found it enormously stimulating.

"Napoleon spent about a year as an absolute, independent ruler of a large country. He was passing laws, improving sanitation, installing street lights, bringing in the land registry etc. He was also commanding an army that could have easily ditched him in favour of one of the other generals. He wasn't at that moment the legendary Napoleon who every soldier would follow to their death. However, he really learnt to impose himself as ruler and supreme commander and realised that he had it in him to overcome a real setback, which was the failure at Acre.

"It was nevertheless also a time when he was young and things were still fresh. Even though he had power he wasn't tied to it. Once he got back to Paris he was really tied down by the necessity to carry out the coup and from then on by the necessity of keeping a grip on power and ruling France and larger parts of Europe. It might have given him much satisfaction but it was exhausting. I think the whole Egyptian episode in his life was extremely formative. It was – in an odd way – a moment of great liberation."



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Adam Zamoyski is the author of *Napoleon: The Man Behind The Myth*, which is published by HarperCollins. To purchase a copy visit: **www.harpercollins.co.uk**

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NAZI SCAPEGOAT OR WEAK LINK?

WORDS **PRIT BUTTAR**

RE-EVALUATING THE ROMANIAN ARMY

In the wake of the disastrous collapse of the Eastern Front in 1944, many German generals blamed their Romanian allies for performing poorly, or being unwilling to fight. However, as Prit Buttar reveals in his latest book, the truth behind this account has been clouded behind Soviet and Nazi propaganda

History is usually written by the victors, however the narrative of the Eastern Front, at least in the English-speaking world has for decades been unusual in that it has been dominated by the version of events given by the defeated side. There are many reasons for this – when the first accounts began to appear in the 1950s, the Soviet Union was widely regarded as a hostile power. Soviet historiography dictated that former Red Army veterans produced stereotyped accounts of the fighting, in which all Germans were routinely portrayed as Nazis or 'Hitlerites' and all Soviet soldiers were great champions of the socialist cause. The memoirs of German combatants of all ranks painted a very different picture. The Wehrmacht was portrayed as a technically superior force, led with superlative expertise, and was ultimately defeated by sheer weight of numbers. Its involvement in atrocities was minimal, and the entire conflict was increasingly described as a great crusade to defend Europe from Bolshevism.

One of the few areas where Soviet and German accounts tended to agree was the performance of the Romanian Army on the Eastern Front. The Germans regarded their allies as poorly trained, poorly motivated and poorly equipped; several German officers wrote in their memoirs that they routinely had to attach German units to Romanian formations in order to make them more effective. The orthodox Soviet view after the war was that Romanian soldiers had been forced to fight for the Axis by their Fascist leadership and were only too willing to surrender or desert. Both of these viewpoints had some basis in truth, but both were also incorrect in many respects. It is only since the end of Communist rule in Romania and the appearance of a distinct Romanian narrative that there has been an alternative point of view to that of German and Soviet sources.

Romania's military might parades before King Karol In Bucharest, c.1940

© Getty

In order to assess the German and Soviet narratives of the performance of Romanian troops, a close look at the major campaigns in which the Romanians took part is required: the initial invasion and the siege of Odessa; Romanian occupation policies; the disaster at Stalingrad; Romanian involvement in Crimea in 1944; and the performance of Romanian troops in Romania itself in the same year. Each of these should be considered to assess whether the Romanians showed reluctance to fight, whether their training proved to be inadequate, and whether they suffered from poor equipment.

Ion Antonescu, the Romanian premier, was keen to be involved in the German invasion of the Soviet Union, not least because under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Stalin forcibly annexed Bessarabia and Bukovina, territory that had been under Romanian control. Consequently, Romania contributed seven army corps grouped into Third and Fourth Armies to Barbarossa, and in combination with German forces these units advanced swiftly to and across the Dniester River and closed with Odessa. The port on the Black Sea was regarded as an important base by both sides and its capture was regarded as a key objective for the Axis forces; similarly, the Red Army regarded its defence as essential. At the same time, the German Army Group South wished to advance further east as fast as possible, and the siege was left largely in the hands of the two Romanian armies. The first fighting took place on 5 August and combat continued until mid-October when the remaining Soviet troops were evacuated by sea. The battle cost the Romanians nearly 90,000 killed or wounded, a measure of the intensity of the fighting. This phase of the war saw little evidence of any Romanian reluctance to fight.

The region to the west of the Dniester was annexed by Romania and Antonescu's forces immediately initiated a major campaign against Jews, suspected Communists, the Roma community and any others deemed to be 'undesirables'. In this role, they showed the same degree of vigour and brutality as German forces elsewhere – again, there was little sign of any reluctance to implement these policies. At the same time, Romanian troops continued to move forward with Army Group South and were involved in fighting in the Crimea; here too, the few German accounts that mention their involvement make no criticism of their performance.

The role of the Romanians in the Stalingrad encirclement is well known; the Romanian Fourth Army defended a large marshy area to the south of the city and Third Army was deployed along the Don River to the northwest. The Red Army deliberately chose to attack in these sectors, correctly assessing that the Romanians would not be able to put up prolonged resistance to armoured forces. When the fighting began, these predictions proved to be correct and both Romanian armies rapidly collapsed.

The German narrative of Romanians being reluctant to fight largely originates in the encirclement battle of Stalingrad. It is certainly true that many Romanian units collapsed as soon as they came under attack, but others fought with great determination: a group of Romanians on the Don front struggled on in their original positions for several days after they were bypassed, and another force of roughly regimental strength doggedly fought its way back from the Don to the Chir valley, in almost constant contact with Soviet forces. German officers like Hollidt, Wenck and others who patched together a new front line with improvised formations would have faced a far harder task if all the Romanians had proved to be as unwilling to fight as they are often portrayed in German accounts.

The reasons for the poor performance of the Romanians in these battles are also relevant. There was general acceptance that they lacked anti-tank weapons and despite repeated promises, the Germans did not provide sufficient guns or ammunition to remedy this. Similarly, the deployment of the Romanian troops was unsatisfactory. Third Army faced two substantial Soviet bridgeheads across the Don and made several requests to attack and destroy them; these requests were rejected, largely because the Germans did not wish to divert air support from their operations in Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Therefore, although the Romanian units proved to be brittle and put up little concerted resistance, the blame for this must lie largely with the Germans.

Romanian forces were largely withdrawn from the front line at the end of the Stalingrad battles, but remained present in the western parts of Ukraine and Crimea. By 1944, with much of Romania under regular air attack by British and American bombers, Antonescu could see that the tide of the war had turned and there was widespread discontent within the civil population. Hitler insisted on Romania providing oil and agricultural produce for Germany, but showed little inclination to pay for the supplies. The resulting shortages within Romania caused severe inflation, which added to anti-German resentment. King Michael of Romania was increasingly vocal in his criticism of German policies, and there was little desire to reinforce the Romanian units in Crimea. Consequently, as fighting approached the region, many of these Romanian units were at barely 50 percent of their establishment strength; in addition, the men would have known about the growing anti-German feeling in their homeland, and this would have weakened their resolve to fight.

There was a growing partisan movement in the peninsula and the German General

A Romanian soldier charges his mortar with a bomb at an emplacement on the Russian front of Kuban River. Russia, May 1943

***Below:** King Michael of Romania was vocal in his criticism of German policies*

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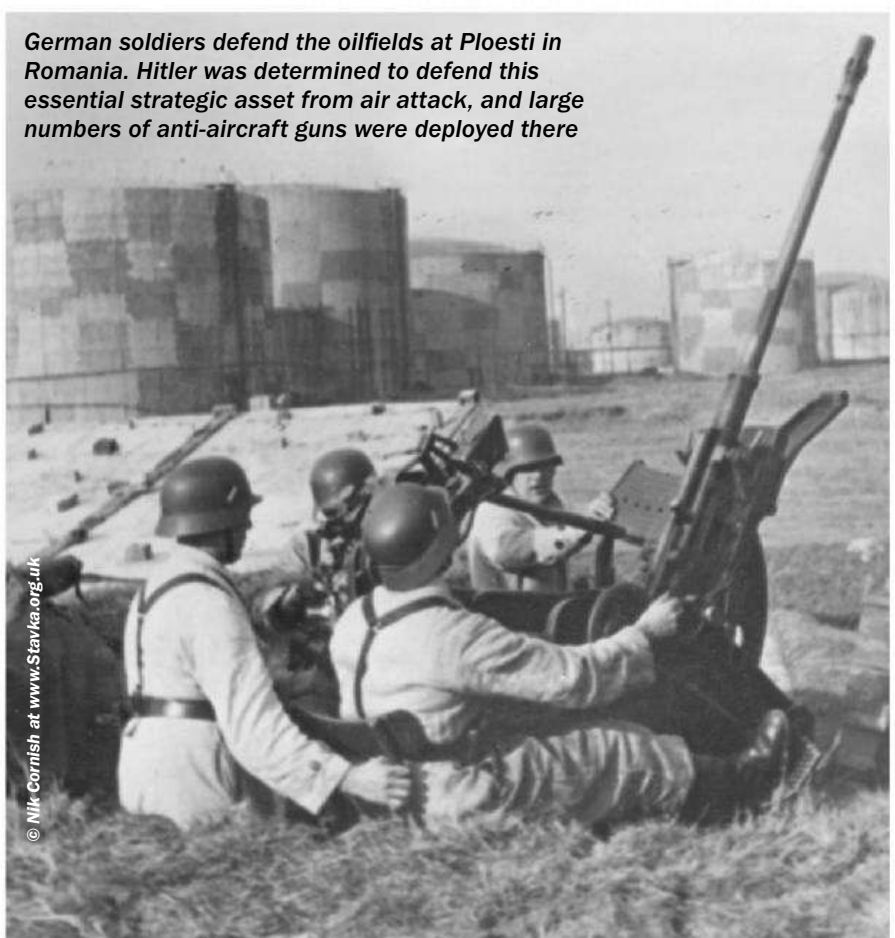
German soldiers defend the oilfields at Ploesti in Romania. Hitler was determined to defend this essential strategic asset from air attack, and large numbers of anti-aircraft guns were deployed there



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Edwin Jaenecke, in whose Seventeenth Army the Romanian units were operating, ordered widespread anti-partisan sweeps. A Soviet post-war account described one such operation, "Early in the morning on 23 December, Olga [a fellow partisan] met me. From her gloomy face, I realised that something had happened. 'Bad news,' she said. 'A large train with troops arrived at the station. While they were disembarking, a Romanian soldier told a railway worker that they were being transferred here from the front to fight the partisans. The Romanian asked him to warn the partisans'. I was doubtful. 'This is just gossip. There aren't that many troops being moved to the rear'. 'I don't know,' she replied. 'This Romanian said that he had been captured by the partisans. They gave him food and wine and released him'. … We gathered more information from underground sources. This confirmed the message of the Romanian. The Germans were really preparing for a large trawl through the forests. The most complete report was sent to me from Musya [another partisan], 'During 23–24 December, troops marched constantly through Simferopol and its suburbs,' she wrote. 'They were made up of infantry with rifles, machine-guns, artillery, small-calibre mountain guns, and anti-aircraft guns … In five days, the soldiers will be sent into the forest. Their task is to encircle the woodland, set it ablaze if necessary, and utterly destroy the partisans. Some of the Romanians are ready to surrender and go over to the partisans. But there are quite a few bastards who will be merciless. One said, 'We promised that each of us would kill at least five partisans. Anyone who kills 20 will immediately be granted leave and a cash prize'."

This account is interesting in that it suggests that Romanian soldiers were treated well by partisans; this is questionable, given the widespread knowledge of Romanian involvement in atrocities, but the Soviet post-war narrative chose to portray events differently – Romania was now an ally of the Soviet Union, and it was therefore important to portray the involvement of its soldiers in the recent war in an appropriate manner.

When Soviet forces attacked into Crimea in April 1944, Romanian troops found themselves once more in the front line. The German accounts repeatedly describe their weakness in the face of Soviet attacks, but a closer look at the fighting suggests that Romanian formations were no less resilient than their German counterparts – by this stage of the war, German infantry also showed as little resistance to armoured attacks.

In the retreat from eastern Crimea, two Romanian battalions formed the main rearguard and successfully fended off the attacks of the Soviet Coastal Army. These battalions were part of the Romanian Mountain Corps, which was commanded by Hugo Schwab; in the First World War, he had served in the forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and took Romanian citizenship when his Transylvanian homeland became part of Romania. Schwab ordered the two battalions to retreat to the small port of Alushta where he was assured they would be evacuated by German boats, but the town was abandoned by the retreating Germans without any attempt

to inform Schwab. His troops turned inland, where they were overwhelmed.

Several substantial groups of Romanian soldiers managed to reach Sevastopol, and in early May the Romanian Navy began an operation to evacuate all Axis forces from Crimea. Several ships were involved, and despite the loss of at least one merchant vessel and severe damage to several other ships, the Romanians succeeded in rescuing nearly 48,000 German and Romanian soldiers.

The Romanian involvement in the fighting in Crimea therefore does not fit the German viewpoint that their allies repeatedly let them down. On this occasion, their performance was no worse than that of German units, and without the determined efforts of the Romanian Navy, none of the German Seventeenth Army would have escaped from Crimea.

By this stage of the war, the conflict had reached the territory that Stalin had seized from Romania in 1940. When Ivan Konev's 2nd Ukrainian Front attempted to thrust south into Romania west of the city of Iasi, they were faced by the Romanian Fourth Army, which was subordinated to the German Eighth Army.

Otto Wöhler, the German commander, visited the Romanian units in late March 1944 and recorded that he had little confidence that the Romanians would put up much resistance. When the Soviet attack began on 7 April, it seemed to make good progress, driving back the Romanian IV Corps, but the reality was that the Romanians had never intended to hold the front line assigned to them by the Germans; they fell back to the Strunga Line, a series of fortifications on high ground a little to the south, where they brought Konev's forces to an abrupt stop. A German counter-attack rapidly drove back Konev's units, but the initial Romanian retreat strengthened the German negative assessment of their allies.

One of the German units in the region was the Grossdeutschland division, commanded by Hasso von Manteuffel, who shared the widespread low opinion of Romanian troops, "The fighting value of the Romanians was low, and weighed nothing in the balance; they were a burden to us. The officer corps was poor. This judgment applies to all the troops employed in the Romanian boundary position, that is, left of and behind our positions, and the cavalry division held back behind the divisional sector which I had to supply. I counted on none of these formations – and turned out to be only too right!"

The Red Army made a second attempt to penetrate this sector a few weeks later and on this occasion, there was at first glance some justification for the German viewpoint. The Romanian 5th Infantry Division was almost completely routed, but the reality was that it was far from its establishment strength and was attacked by two rifle corps and two tank battalions. In the face of such odds, many German units proved to be just as brittle. Other Romanian infantry units successfully adopted the tactics used by their German allies, allowing Soviet armour to pass and continuing to resist in the rear of the Soviet advance. By the end of the month, the front line had stabilised once more.

Throughout 1944, the Germans faced one crisis after another. By the end of the summer, King Michael was preparing to take his country out of its alliance with Germany, moving carefully to avoid alerting the Germans of his intentions. In an attempt to improve the performance of Romanian units, the Germans had attached elements of German formations to Romanian divisions, and the efficacy of these arrangements was put to the test in late August when the Red Army launched an attack.

As was often the case, the first Soviet assault – by 3rd Ukrainian Front's 37th and 46th Armies – fell on the seam between Axis formations, with the German Sixth Army to the north and the Romanian Third Army to the south. Two Romanian divisions bore the brunt of the initial attack and were driven back about six miles on the first day; a little to the north, the German XXX Corps also came under attack and was also forced back six or seven miles.

The Germans claimed that the Romanians withdrew without firing a shot, but this seems unlikely, as the Soviet penetrations in the Romanian sector were almost identical to their advances in the German sector. Further north, on Sixth Army's other flank, the Soviet 2nd Ukrainian Front also attacked, driving back the German 76th Infantry Division without difficulty.

"WITHOUT THE DETERMINED EFFORTS OF THE ROMANIAN NAVY, NONE OF THE GERMAN SEVENTEENTH ARMY WOULD HAVE ESCAPED FROM CRIMEA"

The Romanian 1st Armoured Division was Romania's only large tank formation, and fielded 48 Pz.IV tanks and 22 assault guns, together with a small number of tank destroyers made from captured Soviet equipment. The division was ordered into action against the northern Soviet attack. Many German accounts, including one written by the German liaison officer serving with 1st Armoured Division, stated that the Romanians refused to fight the Red Army, but the limited advance of Soviet tanks in the early stages of their attack suggests that they must have encountered at least partial resistance.

Recent Romanian accounts have described a prolonged tank battle before the Romanian division was driven off, but the exact details of the clash remain obscure. In any event, the Romanian counter-attack, accompanied by the German 13th Panzer Division, made little impact. The entire Axis position in northwest Romania collapsed, resulting in the partial encirclement and destruction of Sixth Army.

Meanwhile, political events were moving forward. On 23 August, Antonescu was summoned to the royal palace, where Michael instructed him to take Romania out of the Axis and thus sever its ties to Germany. Antonescu refused, and was promptly arrested, and his government was dismissed. Troops loyal to the king took control of key government and administrative buildings in Bucharest; General Constantin Sanatescu, a former cavalry officer who had served on the Eastern Front before becoming Marshal of the Royal Palace in 1943, became the new premier. That evening, King Michael made a radio broadcast to his nation, declaring a ceasefire and asking the people of Romania not to resist the advance of the Red Army. As soon as a ceasefire agreement was ratified, Romania would actively join the Allies and would fight against Germany.

There might have been doubts about the willingness of Romanian troops to fight against the Red Army prior to this date, but any resistance now effectively came to an end, giving the Soviet forces an almost free hand to drive on to their objectives. On 12 September, the Allied Powers formally recognised that Romania had changed sides; despite this, over 130,000 Romanians remained prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, where many would die before they could return home.

Antonescu was handed over to the Romanian Communists, who in turn passed him to the Soviet authorities when they arrived. He was taken to Moscow and was interrogated about the German-Romanian alliance and Romanian involvement in the Holocaust. At one stage during these interrogations, he tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide. After the war, he was sent back to Bucharest and prosecuted on a variety of charges. He was executed in 1946.

Everywhere across Romania, there was growing chaos. Romanian troops began to take control of airfields, forcing the Luftwaffe to make hasty evacuations. Attempts to detain German units in Bucharest led to fighting between the two sides, and the intervention of Stuka dive-bombers added to the confusion. Pinned to the Black Sea coast, the Romanian Third Army laid down its weapons and began to reorganise so that it could fight alongside the Soviet forces against Germany. Not long after, Bulgaria also left the Axis.

Today, it is still difficult to get a clear picture of how effectively the Romanians fought against the Red Army. They provided valuable support for Germany in the opening phases of the war, and had they not taken the leading role in the siege of Odessa, it would have been necessary to divert German units to the battle. While Romanian formations on the flanks of Stalingrad proved to be brittle when attacked, their weakness in terms of anti-tank weaponry was little secret and the Germans repeatedly failed to deliver promised weapons and training. In the closing battles in Crimea and Romania, Romanian troops proved to be no more brittle than their ally.

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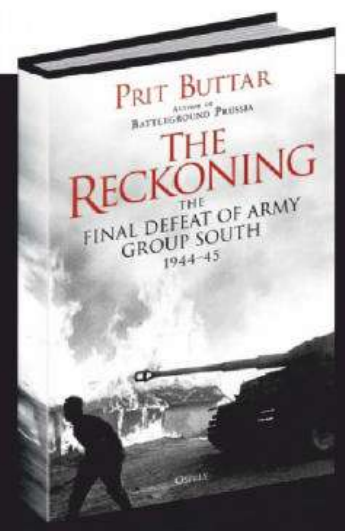

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TEWKESBURY, ENGLAND 4 MAY 1471

Many Lancastrian nobles and knights sought sanctuary in Tewkesbury after the battle but Edward had them dragged out and executed within days

TEWKESBURY

WORDS TOM GARNER

The Wars of the Roses reached a crescendo in 1471 that showed England the leader that Richard, Duke of Gloucester, could become

In the popular imagination, the Wars of the Roses ended with the death of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. The House of York had fallen and England belonged to the Tudors under Henry VII. However, it is arguable that the true fight between the houses of York and Lancaster ended 14 years previously.

The Battle of Tewkesbury is one of the greatest clashes in English history and was the final direct encounter between the Yorkists and a purely Lancastrian force. It witnessed the death of a prince of Wales, destroyed the ambitions of a queen, entrenched the rule of a king and sealed the grisly fate of another monarch. Its story has all the hallmarks of a Medieval epic and was the culmination of decades of civil strife.

England had been engaged in an intermittent but bloody civil war since 1455. Until that time the Plantagenets had ruled uninterrupted for 245 years, but the deposition of Richard II in 1399 by his Lancastrian cousin Henry IV transformed the status quo. Richard II's declared heirs were the Earls of March, and some of their descendants later became the Dukes of York. The Yorkists never forgot their thwarted claims to England's throne. Henry IV succeeded in establishing a Lancastrian dynasty, which reached its zenith under Henry V. However, it was the weak rule of his son Henry VI that would see Yorkist ambitions reasserted.

Medieval kingship depended on personal charisma and political skill. Henry VI possessed none of these. He ascended the throne in 1422 aged only nine months and, thanks to the military campaigns of his father and uncles, had been in the privileged position of being crowned both king of England and France, the only English king ever to do so. Despite this, his long minority was beset by

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

infighting between ambitious nobles on his council, and by the time he came of age in 1444, it was obvious that Henry lacked the ability to control his aristocracy. Consequently, Henry VI's vast lands in France were gradually lost and he made continuous mistakes in his foreign and domestic policy. When the English finally lost the Hundred Years' War in 1453, Henry descended into madness.

Into this power vacuum stepped Richard, Duke of York, who was declared lord protector of England by the royal council, much to the chagrin of Henry's feisty queen Margaret of Anjou. York, who was keenly aware of his own strong claim to the throne, attempted to eliminate Henry VI's favourites to consolidate power. The Wars of the Roses began in 1455 when York killed the Lancastrian Duke of Somerset at the First Battle of St Albans. Queen Margaret became increasingly alarmed at York's growing power and their mutual antipathy exploded into a full-blown civil war in 1459. Although York himself was killed at the Battle of Wakefield in December 1460, his eldest son Edward continued the fight and proclaimed himself King Edward IV in March 1461. He proceeded to defeat the Lancastrians at the Battle of Towton in 1461, known as the bloodiest battle in English history. The still-feeble Henry VI, along with Margaret and their son Edward, Prince of Wales, was forced to flee to Scotland.

The House of York was triumphant. Edward IV was a striking contrast to Henry VI. Although he was only 19 years old in 1461, he had considerable military acumen. He was also known to be affable and good looking, making him the epitome of what a Medieval warrior king should be. These personal qualities and his victory at Towton ensured that he had widespread support for his rule, but his throne was not yet secure. While Henry VI was still alive, Edward could not guarantee total loyalty from his subjects. Henry spent four years wandering through Scotland and northern England, surviving on the goodwill of Lancastrian sympathisers, but he was eventually captured in 1465 and held in the Tower of London. At this stage, Edward chose not to kill Henry, as he was a visibly poor figurehead for the Lancastrian cause. His death would have meant that the unproven Prince Edward, who might have been a more potent foe, would represent the Lancastrians. As events turned out, Edward IV's greatest enemy came from within.

Edward IV largely owed his crown to one person: Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick. As the constable of Calais, Warwick had been crucial to the Yorkist cause during the late 1450s and early 1460s. Calais was not only strategically vital to England but also held its largest standing army. In many ways he was becoming more powerful than the king

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

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***Right, top:** King Edward IV regained his throne in 1471 by decisively winning the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in quick succession*

***Right:** Through his weak rule and subsequent mental breakdown Henry VI had created the circumstances that caused his deposition in 1461. By the time of his 'Readeption' he was merely a figurehead for the Lancastrians*

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

***Above:** Although they were once mortal enemies, Queen Margaret and Warwick combined forces in a last attempt to topple Edward IV*

and tensions began to brew throughout the 1460s, particularly after Edward married Elizabeth Woodville while Warwick was trying to arrange a match with the sister-in-law of Louis XI of France. The two men slowly grew apart, each mistrusting the other. In 1469, Warwick openly rebelled against Edward IV and even briefly took him prisoner after the Battle of Edgecote. Warwick was forced to release Edward and flee to France where he made an alliance with an angry, but desperate, Margaret of Anjou to restore Henry VI. To secure the deal, Warwick married his daughter Anne Neville to Henry's son Prince Edward, and after a successful invasion, Edward IV was forced to flee to Flanders.

Henry VI was released from the Tower of London and restored to his throne on 3 October 1470 in an event known as the Readeption. Warwick's career as 'kingmaker' was now at its peak and he himself virtually ruled England, as Henry VI was by now mentally incoherent. However, this situation would not last long. Edward IV returned, landing off Yorkshire to reclaim his throne in March 1471. He soon gathered an army and defeated and killed Warwick at the Battle of Barnet on 14 April 1471. This was a crushing blow to the

"WARWICK'S CAREER AS 'KINGMAKER' WAS NOW AT ITS PEAK AND HE HIMSELF VIRTUALLY RULED ENGLAND, AS HENRY VI WAS BY NOW MENTALLY INCOHERENT"

Lancastrians. Although Warwick had been a traitor to both causes, he was a significant military and political leader, and his loss would greatly influence the course of the final battle for Lancastrian England.

Warwick may have been killed, but his scheming plans were very much alive. Edward IV had only defeated one half of the alliance against him. As part of Henry VI's Readeption,Margaret of Anjou raised her own army and fleet to help restore her husband to the throne. A Lancastrian fleet of 70 ships set sail and, by an ironic twist of fate, Margaret landed at Weymouth in Dorset on the same day as the Battle of Barnet. After hearing of Warwick's destruction, Margaret wanted to leave England, but she was persuaded to try to link up with the Welsh forces of Henry VI's half-brother Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke. The Duke of Somerset (the son of the previously executed duke) and the Earl of Devon had already raised an army of 6,000 men in the West Country. With this army, Margaret headed north towards Wales.

Meanwhile, Edward IV had to rapidly reassemble an army to deal with Margaret as he had disbanded most of the men who had fought at Barnet. The king realised that Margaret would march to meet Pembroke and set off in hot pursuit from Windsor with 5,000 men, making the Yorkists slightly outnumbered by the Lancastrians. Margaret was also in haste, and on 3 May 1471, the Lancastrians halted near Tewkesbury after a forced march from Dorset. The Yorkists caught up, having marched almost 50 kilometres in one afternoon. Both sides were exhausted but they were now so close to each other a battle was inevitable, and the fate of England would be decided the next day.

EDWARD OF WESTMINSTER: ROSE WITHOUT FLOWER

Henry VI's heir was showing signs of burgeoning kingship before his untimely death

Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales, spent most of his short life growing up in exile and the shadow of war. Born in 1453, he was the treasured only son of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. He witnessed his first battle when he was only seven years old at the Second Battle of Albans in February 1461, which apparently toughened his spirit. While he and his mother were living in exile in 1467 the Milanese ambassador to France reported, "He already talks of nothing but cutting off heads or making wars, as if he had everything in his hands or was the god of battle or the peaceful occupant of that (English) throne." A fellow exile Sir John Fortescue also remarked, "As soon as he became grown up he gave himself over to martial exercises… and he often delighted in attacking and assaulting the young companions attending him."

The youth was clearly nothing like his father and appeared to be more like his warmongering grandfather Henry V. Nevertheless, this ruthless potential would be destroyed at Tewkesbury where Prince Edward was killed aged seventeen. The manner of his death is disputed. Most historians agree that he was killed in the fighting. Others claim he was captured by his brother-in-law the Duke of Clarence, who ordered him to be murdered despite the prince's pleas for mercy. The most famous, and least likely, story is that the prince was captured and brought before Edward IV who demanded to know why he had taken up arms against him. The prince apparently replied that he had come to reclaim his father's kingdom, whereupon Edward IV promptly executed him for his impertinence.

Whatever the truth, Prince Edward was dead before other Lancastrian leaders were unceremoniously removed from Tewkesbury Abbey in defeat. He was buried in the abbey itself, along with the Lancastrian dynasty.

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales, was executed by Edward IV

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

***Above:** The Battle of Tewkesbury as depicted in* Pictures of English History *(c.1850)*

In the early morning of 4 May, the Lancastrians deployed their force in the fields south of Tewkesbury. Their force was divided into three divisions or 'battles'. The Duke of Somerset was in overall command and positioned himself on the right flank. On the left was the Earl of Devon and the centre was shared between Prince Edward and the more experienced Lord Wenlock – an untrustworthy character. Sometimes known as 'the prince of turncoats', he had initially been a Lancastrian but had spent most of the conflict as a Yorkist and only realigned himself with the Lancastrians during the Readeption. His real loyalty was with his long-standing ally the Earl of Warwick, but now that he was dead, Wenlock's allegiance was uncertain. Margaret of Anjou herself took refuge in a religious house away from the battlefield.

By contrast, the Yorkists were unified. Edward IV commanded the centre with Yorkist stalwart Lord Hastings on his right. On the left was the king's youngest brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester (the future Richard III) whose loyalty was unquestioned.

The battlefield terrain favoured the Lancastrians. In front of them lay difficult ground that included, according to a pro-Yorkist anonymous chronicler, "Foul lanes and deep dykes, and many hedges with hills and valleys, a right evil place to approach, as could well have been devised." If Edward IV was to stop the Lancastrians from linking up with Jasper Tudor, then he would have to cross these obstacles. The king had no choice but to deploy his tired army. He advanced warily and placed 200 spearmen into trees beyond his left flank as a precaution. This prudence would later pay dividends. The morning spring sunshine revealed two armies of glinting armour and colourful waving banners, but with a whiff of modernity. The Yorkists had the advantage of artillery and, combined with archers, they began to blast the Lancastrian lines before a general attack. The cannonballs shredded hedges and smashed through armour and flesh. Somerset decided to counter this

"HE ADVANCED WARILY AND PLACED 200 SPEARMEN INTO TREES BEYOND HIS LEFT FLANK AS A PRECAUTION. THIS PRUDENCE WOULD LATER PAY DIVIDENDS"

BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY

4 MAY 1471

RIVER SEVERN

TEWKESBURY

ST. MARY'S ABBEY

RIVER AVON

HOLME CASTLE

G

A

B

C

BLOODY MEADOW

D

E

F

RIVER SWILGATE

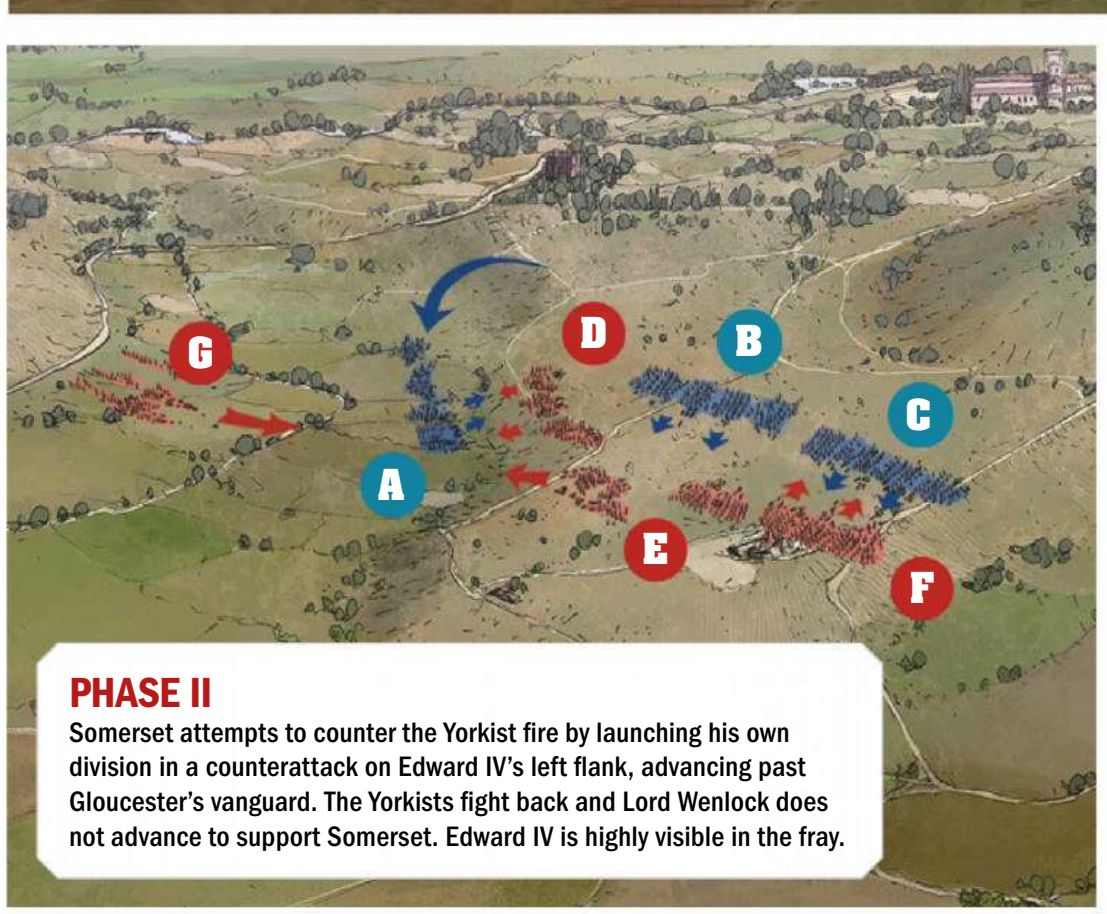
PREST BRIDGE

PHASE I

Gloucester begins the battle with a bombardment mainly aimed at Somerset's division using archers and artillery fire. Arrows darken the sky, while cannon shot burst through the hedges causing noise, chaos and confusion in the Lancastrian lines.

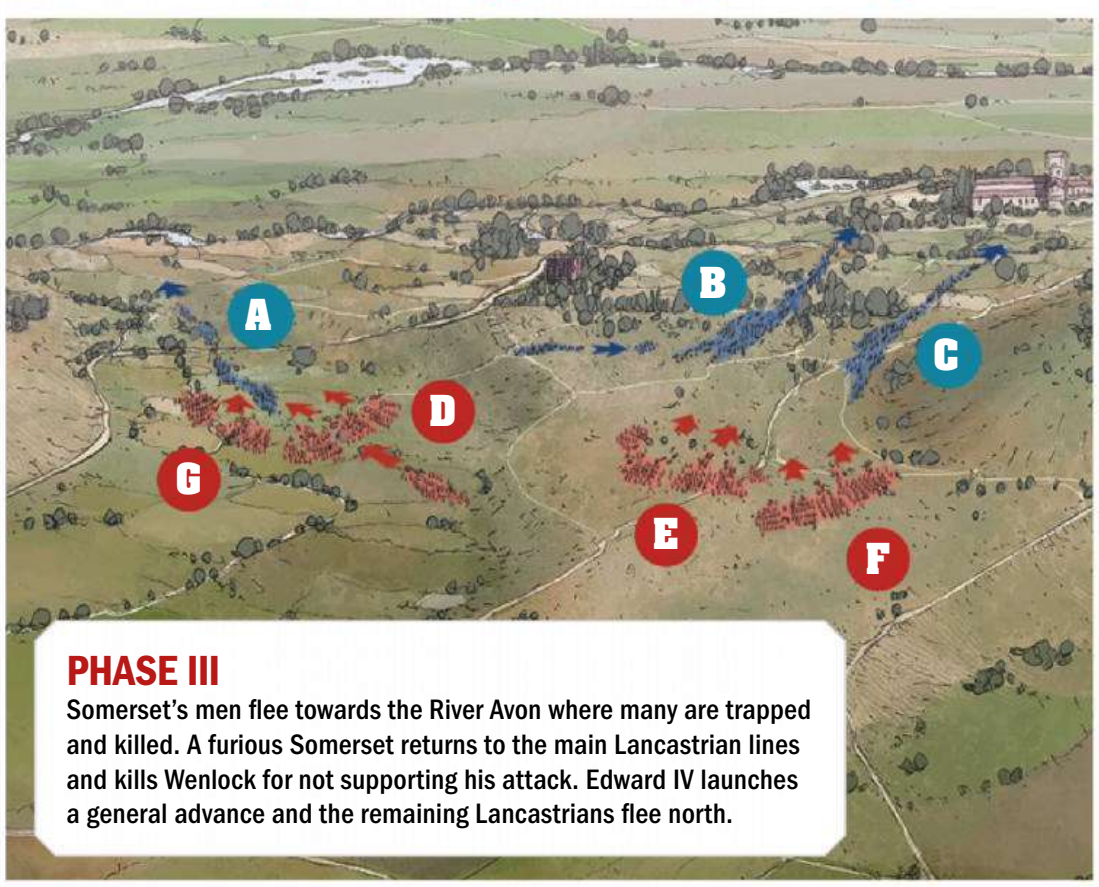
LANCASTRIANS: A Somerset B Wenlock C Devon

YORKISTS: D Gloucester E Edward IV F Hastings G Spearmen



PHASE II

Somerset attempts to counter the Yorkist fire by launching his own division in a counterattack on Edward IV's left flank, advancing past Gloucester's vanguard. The Yorkists fight back and Lord Wenlock does not advance to support Somerset. Edward IV is highly visible in the fray.



PHASE III

Somerset's men flee towards the River Avon where many are trapped and killed. A furious Somerset returns to the main Lancastrian lines and kills Wenlock for not supporting his attack. Edward IV launches a general advance and the remaining Lancastrians flee north.

Margaret of Anjou was taken prisoner after Tewkesbury and Edward IV paraded her through London in triumph

bombardment by taking his division around the Yorkist left and attacking Gloucester's flank. He would be largely concealed by the dense terrain but he needed Wenlock's support to press home the attack.

Somerset manoeuvred his men and surprised Gloucester's flank by breaking their cover and charging towards the Yorkists. Gloucester reacted quickly, turning his division to face Somerset's men and sheltering behind a hedge. This broke the Lancastrian momentum. Part of Edward IV's centre also turned to counter the attack. The weight of numbers began to tell against Somerset and he looked to Wenlock for support. Wenlock's banners failed to advance from the "marvellous strong ground" of the Lancastrians' original position. Nobody knows why Wenlock failed to help Somerset, but it is likely that he was torn between assisting the duke and fighting against

"THAT SAME NIGHT THE PITIFUL HENRY VI DIED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON IN VERY MURKY CIRCUMSTANCES. THE OFFICIAL CAUSE OF DEATH WAS "MELANCHOLY""

his old king. Edward IV's spearmen emerged from the trees and attacked Somerset's rear. This broke his men who "greatly dismayed and abashed … took them to flight".

Edward IV saw his chance and, leading from the front "displayed his banners, did blow up the trumpets, committed his cause to Almighty God and advanced directly upon his enemies". At the same time, Somerset somehow made his way back to the remaining Lancastrian positions and, in the midst of the raging battle, marched up to Wenlock and denounced him as a traitor. He then picked up an axe, set upon Wenlock and "struck his brains out of his head".

While the members of the Lancastrian leadership were murdering each other, the Yorkists advanced through the dykes and hedges and pressed into their disintegrating opponents. A large number of Lancastrians became trapped by the River Severn and were massacred by the Yorkists on its banks. Others tried to take sanctuary in Tewkesbury Abbey, including Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders, although the Earl of Devon, and more crucially the prince of Wales, had already been killed on the battlefield. During the Middle

Right: *The Prince of Wales was brought before Edward IV after the Battle of Tewkesbury*

Right, below: *An illustration of the beheading of Edmund Beaufort, 4th Duke of Somerset, in 1471 at Tewkesbury*

Images: Wiki / PD / CC

Ages, ‘sanctuary’ meant that fugitives could hide in churches in order to achieve immunity from arrest, but Edward IV was in no mood to abide by ecclesiastical laws. After two days, the vengeful Yorkists forcibly entered the abbey and dragged out the Lancastrians, which included Somerset; Hugh Courtenay, the younger brother of the Earl of Devon; Sir John Langstrother, the prior of the Knights of St John of England; and Sir Gervase Clifton. They were subjected to brief trials and executed. Such was the violence perpetrated within and near the abbey it had to be closed for a month and re-consecrated.

The Yorkists had triumphantly won the battle. The Lancastrians lost about 2,000 men, while the Yorkist losses are more uncertain. What was most significant was the dynastic destruction of the Lancastrians. With Prince Edward dead, Margaret of Anjou’s hopes were utterly destroyed. She surrendered to Edward IV within days, and on 21 May, the king paraded her in a chariot through London to visually symbolise her downfall. That same night the pitiful Henry VI died in the Tower of London in very murky circumstances. The official cause of death was “melancholy” but it is far more likely that he was murdered on Edward IV’s orders. He had been kept alive only to weaken his son’s claim to the throne, but he now no longer served any useful purpose. However, what is certain is that Gloucester married Prince Edward’s widow Anne within a year of Tewkesbury. Her vast inheritance from her father the Earl of Warwick made her a highly eligible catch. Such are the spoils of dynastic war.

Margaret of Anjou remained a prisoner in England until 1475 when she was ransomed by Louis XI and spent the rest of her life in France, where she died in 1482. The only surviving males in the Lancastrian line were the obscurely placed Jasper Tudor and his nephew Henry. For the next 13 years they would be hunted men in exile, while the Yorkists basked in the glory of their remarkably restored monarchy. After Tewkesbury, Edward IV had defeated all of his enemies, and when he died in 1483, he believed he left a secure dynasty. However, the exiled Henry Tudor had other ideas.

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HOPE & GLORY

WORDS **TOM GARNER**

Although it was not the first, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment became the most famous African American unit to fight during the American Civil War

Source: PD / US National Guard

In 1775, Dr Samuel Johnson – England's most distinguished man of letters – wrote a pamphlet called 'Taxation No Tyranny' that was directed at the increasingly vocal dissenters for more representation in Britain's 13 American colonies. Johnson was notably forthright in his loathing of slavery and scathingly pointed out the colonists' double standards when he asked, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?"

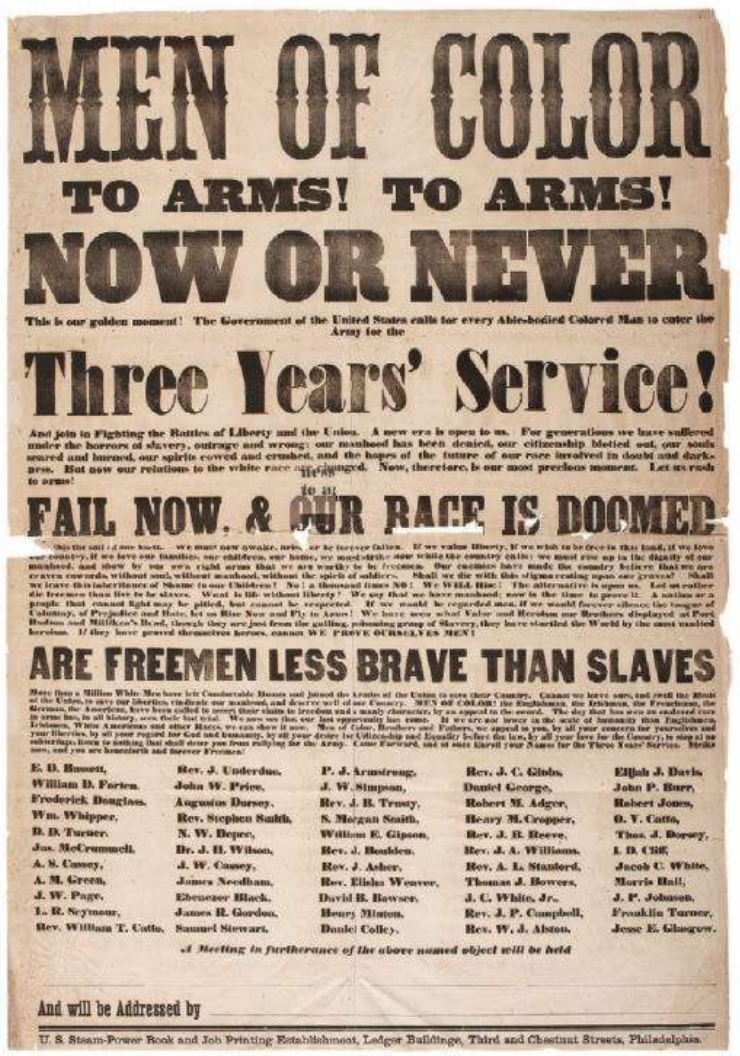
With one sentence, Johnson exposed the hypocrisy that was at the heart of American society even before the United States' Declaration of Independence famously stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

In 1863, America was still grappling with this fundamental issue and tearing itself apart with the most brutal war in its history. White politicians in the Union and Confederacy were stalemated on what it meant to be free in the United States and it would take the courage of the oppressed African American minority to show the way forward in this huge moral struggle. Leading the vanguard were valiant soldiers who have since become legendary – the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

1st Kansas Volunteers

Contrary to its portrayal in the Academy Award-winning 1989 film *Glory*, the 54th Massachusetts was not the first African American regiment to fight for the Union. When the American Civil War began in 1861, the US War Department did not accept black volunteers. It was feared that the Confederacy would interpret this as a war for the abolition of slavery rather than preserving the United States.

The 54th Massachusetts fight on the ramparts of Fort Wagner in a painting called 'The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground' by Rick Reeves



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ARE FREEMEN LESS BRAVE THAN SLAVES

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An 1863 broadside recruiting poster for African American soldiers following the Emancipation Proclamation. Frederick Douglass is listed as one of the main speakers for an upcoming recruiting event

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

Nevertheless, by 1862 the conflict had developed into a total war where Confederate forces were winning notable offensives while thousands of slaves were reporting to Union Army posts. This included in Kansas where Senator James Lane first promoted using fugitive slaves in combat. He stated, "The effect of marching an army on the soil of any slave State will be to instil into the slaves a determined purpose to free themselves; and will crush everything that stands in the way of acquiring that freedom."

Lane recruited free African Americans and former slaves into the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment in August 1862. The 1st Kansas was a state unit rather than a federal regiment but it saw action in a skirmish at Island Mound, Missouri, on 29 October 1862. During the engagement, approximately 250 black soldiers fought off a numerically superior force of Confederate guerrillas. Lane used their success as proof that black troops could fight courageously, which was verified by the regiment's adjutant, "The men fought like tigers, each and every one of them."

The 1st Kansas would go on to fight with distinction until 1864, including at the Battle of Honey Springs in Oklahoma in July 1863. Major-General James G. Blunt praised the bravery of the black soldiers after the battle, "I never saw such fighting as was done by the Negro regiment. The question that Negroes will fight is settled; besides they make better soldiers in every respect than any troops I have ever had under my command."

"Firm antislavery principles"

The 1st Kansas Volunteers paved the way for the recruitment of black soldiers in the Union Army and their service was federally authorised. On 1 January 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in the Confederate States. It also significantly stated that black men would be officially "received into the armed services of the United States".

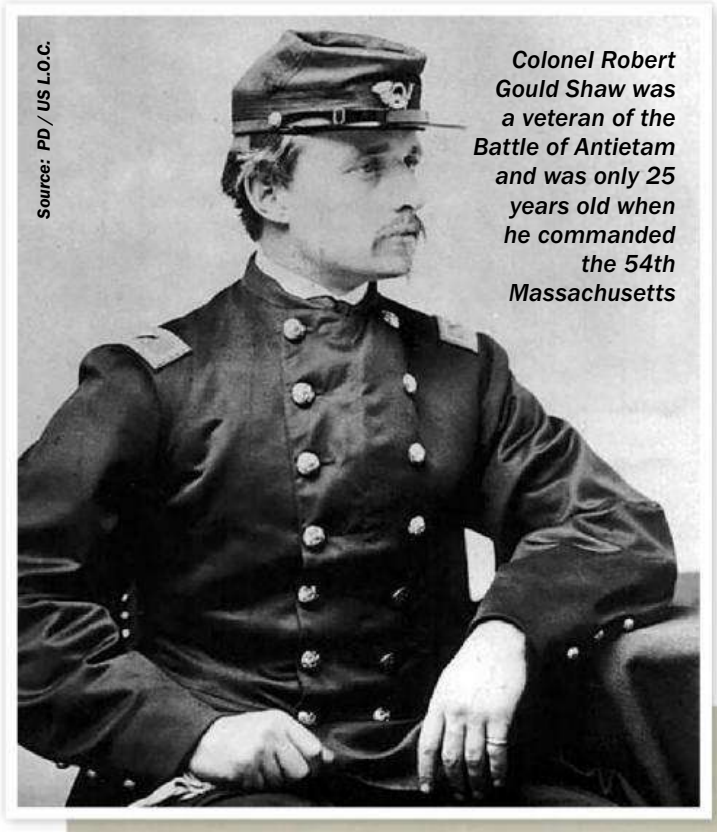
The task of forming the first official federal regiment of black soldiers was undertaken by John Andrew, the abolitionist governor of Massachusetts. Andrew requested white officers "of firm antislavery principles … superior to a vulgar contempt for colour". Captain Robert Gould Shaw, a member of a prominent Boston abolitionist family, was appointed to command the newly formed 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment and was promoted to colonel.

The majority of the regiment's soldiers were free men from the North and recruiting offices were opened in the United States and even Canada. Such was the overwhelming number of volunteers that a second black infantry regiment – the 55th Massachusetts – was also formed. The 54th became active on 13 March 1863 and after their training the regiment received its colours on 28 May 1863. Approximately 20,000 people came to see them march through Boston to begin campaigning but the soldiers were still suffering discrimination.

Black soldiers were paid less than their white counterparts and white citizens were sceptical about their fighting ability. The bravery of the 1st Kansas Volunteers had not been well publicised while the *New York Tribune* reported the hostile attitudes towards the 54th, "Loyal whites have generally become willing that they should fight but the great majority have no faith that they will do so. Many hope they will prove cowards and sneaks – others greatly fear it."

Initially given manual labour duties, the 54th were greeted by African Americans and Northern abolitionist missionaries in South Carolina. They joined forces with a Union unit of freedmen called the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers but were exposed to the brutality of war on 23 June 1863 at Darien, Georgia. Shaw was ordered by the 2nd South Carolina's commander to assist in burning the town. Shaw carried out the order but described the action to his wife as an "abominable a job as I ever had a share in". He was particularly concerned that the burning would damage the reputation of black soldiers, particularly because of the mission of the 54th as a model regiment.

Nevertheless, just a few weeks later the 54th gained its first combat experience during a skirmish on 16 July 1863 with Confederate troops on James Island, South Carolina, during the Battle of Grimball's Landing. They successfully halted a Confederate advance against the retreating 10th Connecticut Infantry Regiment, which allowed their comrades to withdraw more safely. At the



Source: PD / US L.O.C.

Colonel Robert Gould Shaw was a veteran of the Battle of Antietam and was only 25 years old when he commanded the 54th Massachusetts

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Lieutenant Samuel K. Thompson and soldiers of C Company, 54th Massachusetts pose in front of a Rodman cannon at an earthwork fortification

Source: Wiki / PD / CC / Rhododendrites

The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in Boston was unveiled in 1897 and was the first civic monument to commemorate the heroism of African American soldiers. The sculptures are made of bronze and were funded by veteran survivors of the 54th Massachusetts

cost of 43 casualties, the Confederates were pushed back and the action proved the 54th's ability to fight. Just two days later, the regiment found themselves facing their biggest test at Fort Wagner.

"Not a man flinched"

Located on Morris Island, South Carolina, Fort Wagner was part of the Confederacy's defences of Charleston Harbor. An intimidating fortress consisting of 30-feet earth and sand-filled walls, Wagner was protected by 14 heavy artillery pieces that could fire on warships and attacking troops. In early 1863, the Union Navy tried to reduce Charleston's defences before Brigadier-General Quincy Gillmore's forces tried to capture Morris Island's artillery batteries. Neither attacks succeeded while a brigade attack on Fort Wagner on 11 June also failed.

On 18 July, Gillmore launched a second assault against the fort. This time he preceded his attack with sustained artillery and naval bombardments, which forced the 1,800-strong Confederate garrison of Fort Wagner into a bombproof shelter. The firing lasted until sunset until the 624 men of the 54th lined up on a beach to lead the Union vanguard in an infantry assault. Shaw had volunteered his men after Major-General George Strong offered him the dangerous assignment with the words, "You may lead the column. Your men, I know, are worn out but do as you choose."

Facing the 54th were the Confederates' 14 guns (including a Columbiad cannon that fired 128-pound shells), a water-filled ditch, buried land mines and sharpened stakes as well as the garrison. The regiment would be followed by a Union force of over 4,000 men but the 54th marched with bayonets fixed to within 100 yards of the Confederate line. Shaw then ordered a charge and the regiment swept towards the fort under fire. Heavy casualties occurred immediately as Shaw led his men through the earthwork defences and up the slope towards the fort.

As he got over the parapet at the top, Shaw waved his sword and shouted "Forward, 54th!" before he was fatally shot. His death did not deter his men who engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat with the defenders on the barricades. One Confederate soldier recalled that he and the garrison were "maddened and infuriated at the sight of Negro troops" and the battle raged with no quarter given.

Among the 54th troops fighting in the chaos was Sergeant-Major Lewis Henry Douglass, the eldest son of the famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Aged 22, Douglass managed to survive the carnage and vividly wrote to his fiancée Amelia Loguen two days later, "We charged that terrible battery on Morris Island … and were repulsed with a loss of 300 killed and wounded. I escaped unhurt from amidst that perfect hail of shot and shell. It was terrible.

"This regiment has established its reputation as a fighting regiment [and] not a man flinched, though it was a trying time. Men fell all around me. A shell would explode and clear a space of 20 feet, our men would close up again, but it was no use we had to retreat, which was a very hazardous undertaking. How I got out that fight alive I cannot tell."

Douglass's testimony matched the grim statistics. The 54th had suffered 42 percent casualties in the assault, including 280-300 men killed, wounded or missing. Although the 54th were decimated and forced back they had captured the outer rifle pits that surrounded Fort Wagner. Other Union regiments replaced them in the fighting but they were unable to capture Fort Wagner.

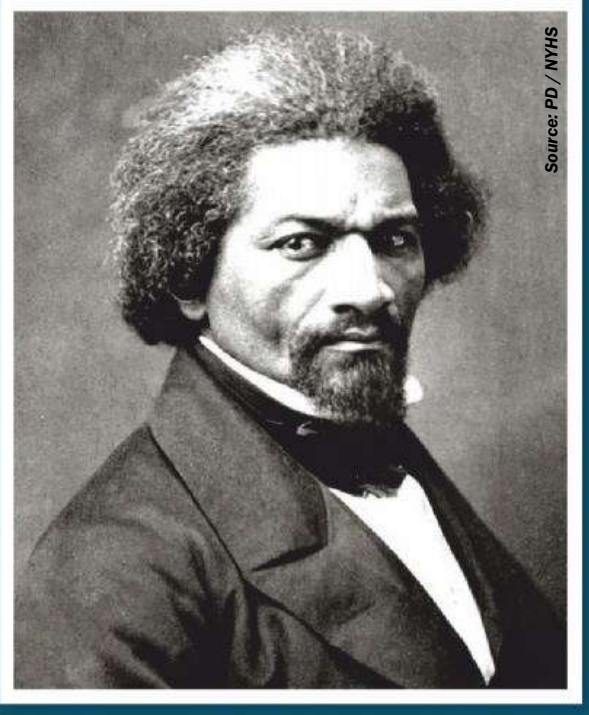
"WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?"

THE MOST FAMOUS AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE 19TH CENTURY, FREDERICK DOUGLASS WAS A KEY FIGURE IN THE FORMATION OF THE 54TH MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY REGIMENT

A heroic leader of the abolitionist movement, Frederick Douglass (1818-95) was one of the greatest orators of his time. Born into slavery in Maryland as the son of an enslaved woman and her master, Douglass escaped and wrote a bestselling autobiography in 1845. Noted for his powerful command of language, Douglass toured the northern United States, Britain and Ireland to promote the cause of the abolition of slavery. Such was his international popularity that his British supporters bought his freedom in 1846. Douglass was a master of oratory and some of his many quotes include, "The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery," and, "What to the slave is the Fourth of July?"

Upon his return to America, Douglass edited anti-slavery journals and supported women's rights before turning his attention to the Civil War. He regarded the conflict's ultimate aim to be the end of slavery and persistently petitioned Abraham Lincoln to prioritise emancipation and the sanctioning of black regiments. Once this was achieved in 1863, Douglass recruited men to join the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments, including two of his sons.

One of his recruiting lines cut to the heart about why African Americans had to fight, "A war undertaken and brazenly carried on for the perpetual enslavement of coloured men calls logically and loudly for coloured men to help suppress it." Hundreds of African Americans answered Douglass's call but he knew that the Union victory in the Civil War would not create racial equality. He later remarked, "The work does not end with the abolition of slavery, but only begins."



Source: PD / NYHS

The most photographed American of the 19th century, Douglass never smiled for the camera as he did not want to play into the racist caricature of a happy slave

“THE EMBLEM OF FREEDOM”

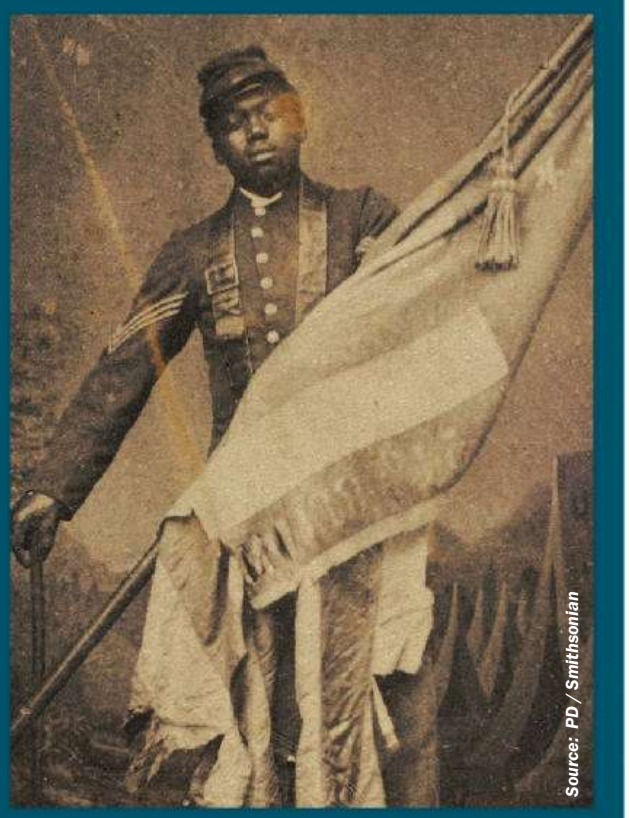
SERGEANT WILLIAM H. CARNEY BECAME THE EARLIEST AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIER TO BE AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HIS EXTREME COURAGE AT FORT WAGNER

Born a slave in Virginia, William Carney (1840-1908) was secretly educated by a private school. His route to freedom is uncertain but he probably escaped slavery through the Underground Railroad and was able to join his parents in Massachusetts. Carney initially joined a black militia unit called the Toussaint Guards in February 1863, which soon merged with the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. Within a month he was a sergeant and he fought with distinction at Fort Wagner.

When the regiment’s standard-bearer fell with the American flag, Carney dropped his weapon and picked it up. He later recalled, “As quick as a thought I threw away my gun, seized the colours, and made my way to the head of the column.” Already wounded, Carney was seen “pressing his wound with one hand and with the other holding up the emblem of freedom”.

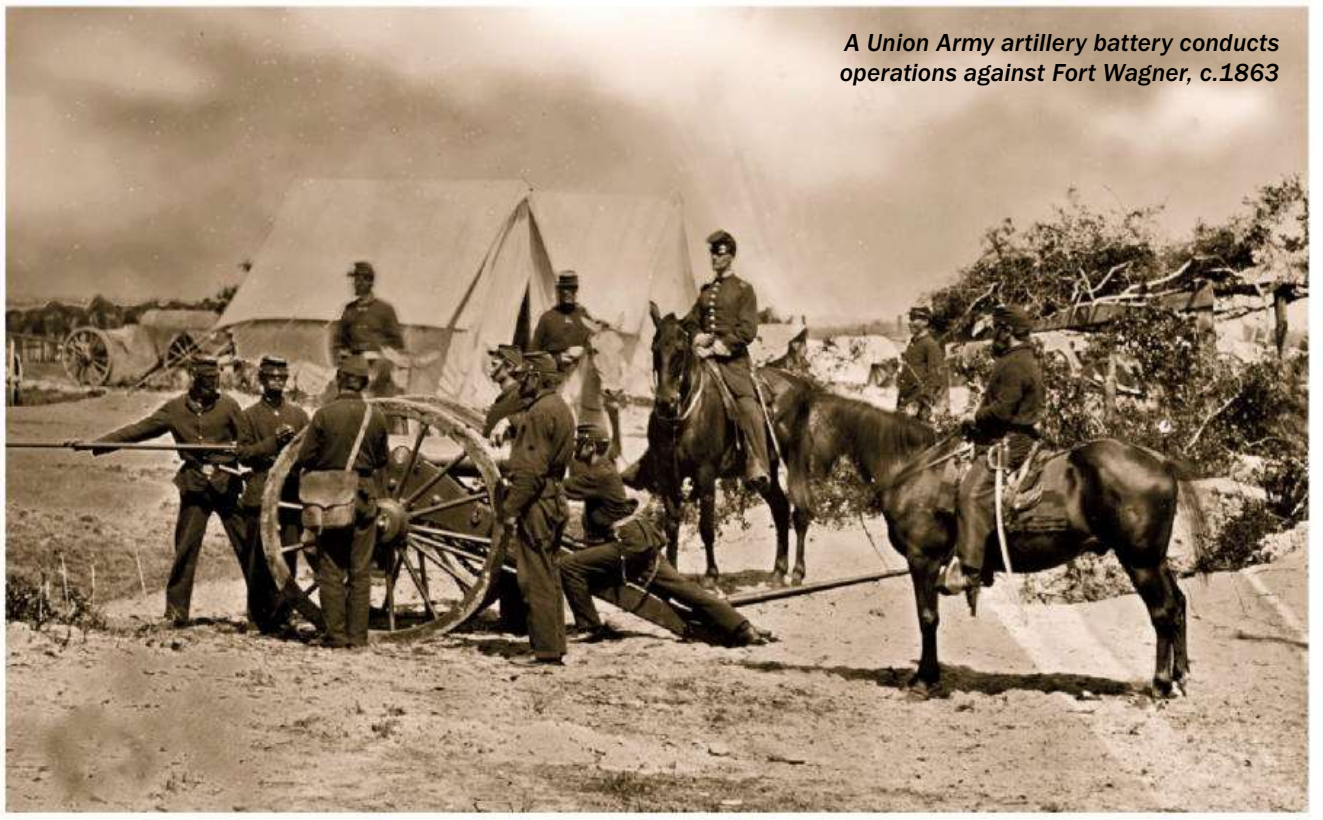
Carney scrambled up the fort’s slope despite coming under a large amount of rifle and grenade fire and managed to fly the flag on the fort’s parapet. Despite being shot twice, Carney folded the flag and managed to take it back to safety. When he returned to Union lines he was still holding it and reportedly said, “Boys, I only did my duty; the old flag never touched the ground!”

Carney was honourably discharged from the Union Army in June 1864 because of his injuries and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts. On 23 March 1900 he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage at Fort Wagner by President Theodore Roosevelt. Twenty black soldiers had been awarded before him but Carney’s actions were the earliest acts of bravery by an African American to be recognised with the medal.



Source: PD/ Smithsonian

Sergeant William H. Carney pictured with the American flag, c.1864



A Union Army artillery battery conducts operations against Fort Wagner, c.1863

© Getty

Shaw and his fallen soldiers were then buried in a mass grave by the Confederate garrison with their commander contemptuously saying, “We have buried [Shaw] with his n*****s.” Although this was intended as an insult, Shaw’s father said that he was proud his son had been buried with his men. For Douglass, the fight was justified, “Remember if I die, I die in a good cause. I wish we had a hundred thousand coloured troops – we would put an end to this war.”

“They have helped mankind”

The assault on Fort Wagner was highly reported and immeasurably changed perceptions about black soldiers. An abolitionist pointedly asked, “Who asks now in doubt and derision ‘Will the Negro fight?’ The answer is spoken from the cannon’s mouth. It comes to us from those graves beneath Fort Wagner’s walls, which the American people will surely never forget.” Governor Andrew, who already knew the regiment’s worth, lavished praise on the 54th, “I know not where, in all of human history, to any given thousand men in arms, there has been committed a work at once so proud, so precious, so full of hope and glory.”

Even Abraham Lincoln alluded to the 54th’s value in a public letter that defended General Ulysses S. Grant’s defence of black soldiers on 26 August 1863. Addressing anti-emancipation, pro-Union Democrats, Lincoln wrote, “Some of the commanders of our armies in the field who have given us our most important successes [ie Grant] believe the emancipation policy, and the use of coloured troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion. You say will not fight to free Negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you.”

In this letter, which was read at a Union mass meeting in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln concluded by reflecting on what the 54th’s moral stand would mean after a final Union victory, “There will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it.”

Source: PD/ Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Library

The 1st Kansas Volunteers Regiment fight the first action of African American soldiers during the Civil War at the Battle of Island Mound, 29 October 1862

The courage displayed by the 54th ultimately led to the creation of 166 black regiments in the Union Army. By the end of the war almost 180,000 African Americans were serving as soldiers. This was ten percent of the army’s entire personnel and further 19,000 served in the Union Navy. Almost 40,000 of these men would die in the war, three-quarters of whom from infection and disease. However, 16 black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor and a further 80 became commissioned officers.

The 54th itself fought on, despite their depleted numbers, until the war’s end. This included the battles of Olustee, Honey Hill and Boykin’s Mill with the latter engagement being one of the last skirmishes of the conflict. The regiment was finally disbanded on 4 August 1865, although it was reactivated in 2008 where it now serves as a ceremonial unit in the Massachusetts National Guard. Although the United States continues to struggle with the toxic legacy of slavery today, the example set by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment remains inspiring. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, this was a band of brave African Americans who were truly dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

AIRFIX

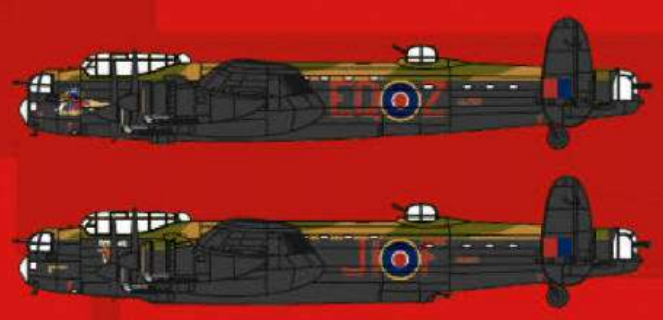
1:72

THE "LANC"

A08001
AVRO LANCASTER B.II

Of the RAF bombers involved in operations over Germany during the Second World War, the Avro Lancaster must rank as the most famous of them all. Although Merlin engines were the more usual power plant for the Lancaster, not all were produced using these engines. Due to the demands put on Rolls Royce by the production of aircraft such as the Supermarine Spitfire and DeHavilland Mosquito, there loomed a potential shortage of the vital engine and the BII variant was equipped with Bristol Hercules radial engines instead, the first of which was completed in September 1942. Faster to 18,000ft, these radial engines were also able to soak up more damage than the Merlin which were normally fitted. However, the service ceiling was lower and with the perceived shortage over by 1944, the B.II was phased out of service by the start of 1945. A worthy alternative to the normal variants, the BII proved to be popular with its crews and a capable version of an excellent bomber.

Speed: 265mph • Range: 1,550 miles • Length: 69ft 6in (21.18M) • Wingspan: 102ft (31.09M) • Armament: 10 x .303in Machine guns; up to 23,000lb of bombs.



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Heroes of the Medal of Honor

WILLIAM J. DONOVAN

During the 1918 Meuse-Argonne Offensive, this officer led the 165th Infantry Regiment against German defences. Wounded, he refused evacuation, directed his command in action and exhibited great heroism

WORDS **MICHAEL E. HASKEW**

The enemy position was formidable. At the eastern end of the fortified Hindenburg Line, the Germans had prepared a veritable killing ground to greet any assault in the sector between the winding River Meuse and the dense, dark Argonne Forest. In less than a month, the Armistice would cause the guns to fall silent. However, until then, Allied and German troops continued fighting and dying on the Western Front as the holocaust of World War I played out in the terrible autumn of 1918.

By September, the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division of the US Army had become a veteran outfit, blooded in battle and absorbing tremendous casualties. The fighting in the spring and summer had cleared the St Mihiel salient, but the troops had suffered badly, losing hundreds to concentrated enemy artillery and machine-gun fire. Among the dead was famed poet Joyce Kilmer, shot in the head by a sniper. Kilmer had accompanied Major William J. 'Wild Bill' Donovan, commander of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry Regiment, to the front line on 30 July, as the officer prepared to lead an attack. The 165th, originally the 69th Regiment, the Fighting 69th of the New York National Guard, was a storied unit, tracing its lineage to the American Civil War, and one of its finest hours was realised in the crucible of war-torn France.

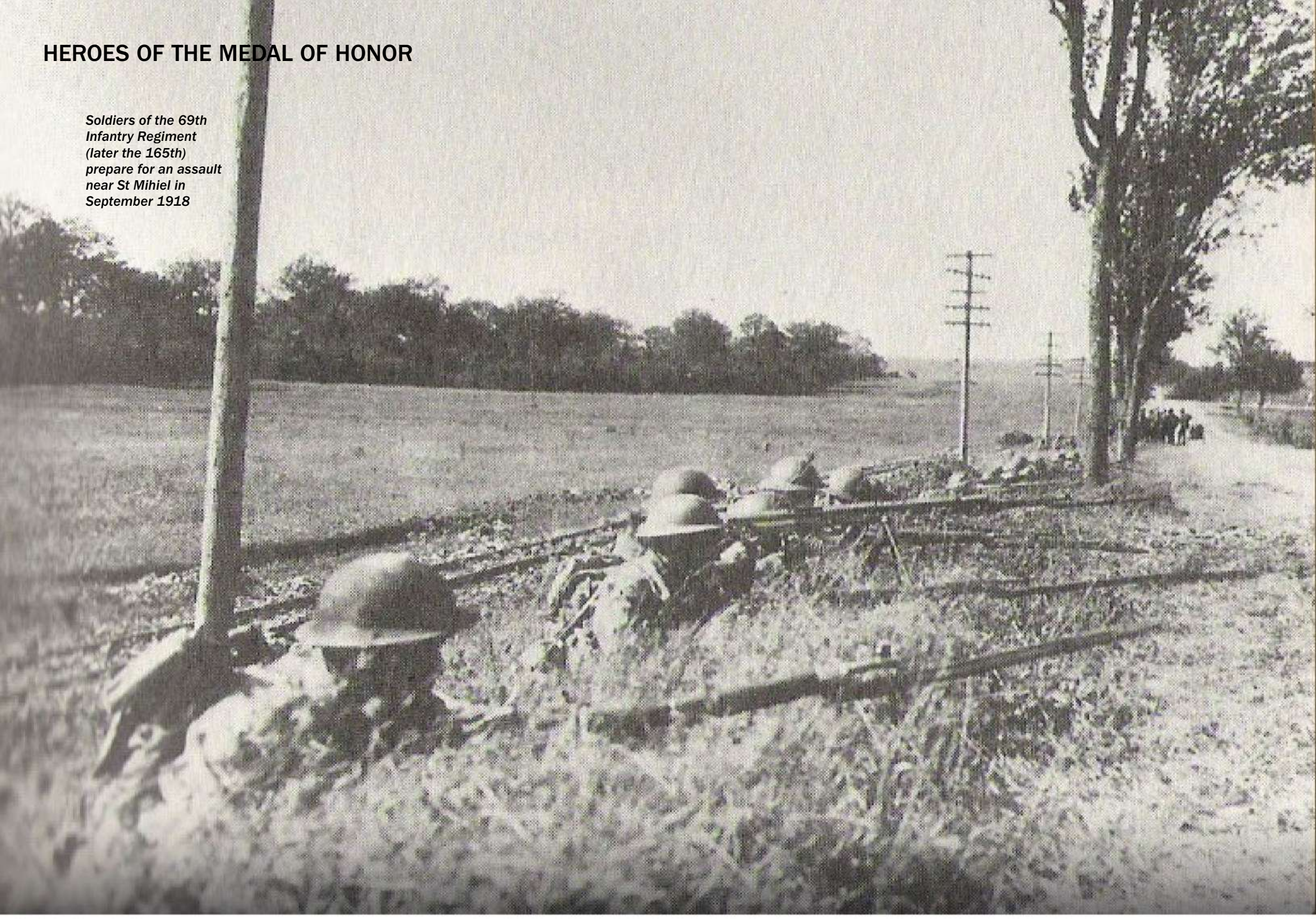
Donovan was already a soldier of burgeoning renown. Known for his personal bravery and nicknamed 'Wild Bill', his actions during this three-day stretch of combat earned him the Distinguished Service Cross. During the course of the war, he was wounded at least three times and nearly blinded by poison gas. His heroism led to awards of the Silver Star, Distinguished Service Medal, Purple Heart, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm and Silver Star, and numerous other honours that made Donovan one of the most highly decorated soldiers of the Great War. However, on 14-15 October, in the line at the Meuse-Argonne near the town of Landres-et-St Georges, this leader of men

***Left:** Colonel William J. Donovan leads the 165th Infantry Regiment during a 1919 victory parade in New York City*

'Wild Bill' Donovan led from the front during the Great War, receiving the Medal of Honor for action in October 1918

"IT DOESN'T BELONG TO ME. IT BELONGS TO THE BOYS WHO ARE NOT HERE, THE BOYS WHO ARE RESTING UNDER THE WHITE CROSSES IN FRANCE..."

William J. Donovan on receiving the Medal of Honor



Soldiers of the 69th Infantry Regiment (later the 165th) prepare for an assault near St Mihiel in September 1918

exhibited courage under fire that is seldom seen. Better known for his formation and leadership of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the modern Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), during World War II, he first gained the admiration of a grateful nation on the battlefield, and during those crucial hours at the Meuse-Argonne, he earned the Medal of Honor.

INTO THE RAVINE

Promoted to lieutenant colonel, Donovan led the 165th Regiment into action on 14 October. Its objective was a German position atop a steep slope with three lines of entrenched infantry studded with machine-gun nests and artillery to rain destruction across the small stream, open ground and the ravine that dominated the approaches. Prior to the assault, upper echelon officers had expected 60 percent casualties among the attacking troops, and in the opening moments that prediction looked to be coming true.

Donovan later recalled the hours leading up to the desperate attack and the withering fire his men encountered immediately after jumping off. “We were suddenly ordered forward to relieve another division, the 1st … Our way led past freshly killed and yet unburied Germans, through [the] unmistakable smell of dead horses … The party started. I moved to the forward position which they were shelling heavily. I could see no advance on our right. Our hour struck and promptly the leading battalion moved out. The Germans at once put down a heavy barrage and swept the hill we had to climb with indirect machine-gun fire. The advance did not go well…”

“… I HAVE TWO EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTERS IN THIS DIVISION, NEITHER OF WHOM I CAN CONTROL … THESE TWO WIN MORE MEDALS THAN I CAN GIVE OUT. ONE IS BILL DONOVAN AND THE OTHER IS DOUGLAS MACARTHUR”

General Charles T. Menoher, commander 42nd Infantry Division

Observers noted that Donovan had declined to remove his rank insignia or medals, preferring to go into action in full uniform. It was a gesture of bravery and confidence for those around him, but also made Donovan a prime target for enemy snipers. When he was warned, the regimental commander quipped, “They can’t hit me, and they won’t hit you!”

As the 165th Regiment moved forward, German resistance intensified, and the slow progress of adjoining units opened the men to devastating flanking fire. A handful of American soldiers reached the coils of barbed wire near the crest of the high ground, only to then become entangled. Donovan wrote, “Men were dropping all over. It was a pretty difficult place. Those who got to the wire were killed or wounded. The rest finally came to a halt on the slope running up from the stream along which there was some cover here and there but not much.”

The 165th had advanced about three kilometres before stopping short of its objective. A number of the company commanders were inexperienced. Preparations had been hurried. The opening barrage from artillery appeared to have done little to diminish the enemy fire, and the regimental commander conceded that the assault had been too weak to succeed, particularly without the tank support that had been promised but didn’t arrive on time.

Nevertheless, Donovan displayed a coolness under fire that steadied the men in their precarious foxholes, just under cover from the incessant stream of German small-arms fire.

"There were times when I had to march at the head of the companies to get them forward," he remembered in a letter. "They would follow me. New men need some visible symbol of authority."

DETERMINATION IN THE DARK

Donovan's troops had clawed a foothold within 500 metres of the German line, and he ordered a reserve battalion forward. However, the renewed assault was beaten back with heavy losses, and by 8.00pm on 14 October the order had been passed to consolidate the gains and hold for the night.

Donovan rolled into a small shell hole with his telephone set close at hand. He dined on a raw onion and two tough crackers known as 'hardtack'. He ordered a lieutenant to lead a party to the rear in search of food – unfortunately these men never returned.

Aware of the prospect for a German counter-attack, he knew that the 165th would be ordered forward again after daylight, but directions from higher command were scant. Ammunition was replenished, and the depleted 165th gathered itself to move forward. At 6:20am, the order to advance at 7:30am finally came through; there was little time to refine the tactical effort.

"A heavy mist was hanging," Lieutenant Colonel Donovan remembered. "I went around to the men and talked to them. All of this was close to the German line … I should not have been there but remained so because it would have had a bad effect on the men if I had taken position further in the rear."

FORWARD ONCE AGAIN

Although the tanks assigned to the attack had still not arrived, Donovan ordered his men to advance at the appointed hour. The situation became dire. He sent messengers to the rear, but they were killed and their pleas for assistance undelivered. A few tanks did come forward, but several were disabled by German artillery.

With no regard for his personal safety, Donovan had moved among his soldiers, encouraging them and instructing those whose officers and NCOs had been killed or wounded. "I had walked to the different units and was coming back to the telephone when smash, I felt as if somebody had hit me on the back of the leg with a spiked club," he wrote. "I fell like a log, but after a few minutes managed to crawl into my little telephone hole. A machine-gun lieutenant ripped open my breeches and put on the first aid. The leg hurt, but there were many things to be done."

Relentless German shelling took its toll, and poison gas was unleashed on the Americans. "Beside me three men were blown up, and I was showered with the remnants of their bodies," Donovan recalled. The telephone went dead. The surviving tanks retired. However, Donovan remained in the hole, just yards from the enemy line. Slipping in and out of consciousness from loss of blood, he maintained command for five hours until wrapped in a blanket and evacuated. The German position finally fell to the 42nd Division on 16 October.

RECOVERY AND RECOMPENSE

Donovan recovered from the bullet wound in his knee, spending days in a French hospital. Initially, he received an oak leaf cluster for his Distinguished Service Cross, but Father Francis Duffy, the famous chaplain of the 165th Infantry, lobbied successfully for an upgrade to the Medal of Honor.

The hero received his country's highest award for valor during a ceremony in New York City that drew 4,000 veterans. War Department General Order No. 56, issued on 30 December 1922, noted that Donovan had "encouraged all near him by example, moving among his men in exposed positions, reorganising decimated platoons, and accompanying them forward in attacks".

During the inter war years, Donovan returned to his prosperous New York law practice, served as US Attorney for the Western District of New York, and held positions in the Justice Department. During the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, he took on several important international diplomatic tasks. He was appointed coordinator of information on 11 July 1941, and became the nation's foremost advocate for the formation of a centralised, federal intelligence agency. Subsequently, Donovan guided the OSS during the Second World War, rising to the Army rank of major general.

After the war, Donovan worked behind the scenes to establish the modern CIA. He served briefly as US Ambassador to Thailand, and died at age 76 on 8 February 1959.

He remains the only individual to have received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, and National Security Medal, among the most prestigious decorations awarded by the United States, and those desperate hours in the Argonne Forest in 1918 were indicative of rare and noble dedication.

Major General William Donovan, director of the OSS, confers with Colonel William Jackson in April 1945

William J. 'Wild Bill' Donovan led the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the modern US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

All images: PD / NARA / US Army Signal Corps

GROUPING THEIR SHOTS
The Yak-9's armament was focused in the nose, with the breaches and ammunition storage pushing the cockpit unusually far back.

YAKOVLEV YAK-9

With a hardy and practical design, this was the USSR's best fighter aircraft in WWII

WORDS **STUART HADAWAY**

The Yak-9 was arguably the best fighter put into mass production by the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Evolved from the successful Yak-1 and Yak-7, it first appeared at the end of 1942. Like the Germans, the Soviets tailored their air force for tactical use, and the Yak-9 was optimised for low or medium altitude flight over the battlefield. Although its high altitude characteristics were poor, at below 4,500-4,800m (15-16,000ft) it compared favourably with the German Bf 109G and the FW 190A, as well as with the best fighters of the Western Allies. A fast and manoeuvrable design, with an excellent rate of climb, the Yak's main drawback would always be a lack of firepower.

Part of the Yak-9's strength lay in its composite construction, with shortages of light alloys forcing the Soviets to resort to wood and fabric in the structure. This made it light and easy to build with basic skills and equipment, at a time when the Soviets were in dire need of aircraft. The result was rough but rugged, and gave the Soviets both the quality and quantity they so badly needed.

A Soviet pilot stands next to his aircraft at a rough forward airfield

© Alamy

Perhaps not the most elegant of aircraft, the Yak-9 was sturdy

© Getty

SIMPLE BUT RESILIENT

The rear fuselage was steel tubing covered in fabric, making the aircraft easy to maintain and repair.

ADDED STING IN THE TAIL

The Yak-9B had a small internal bay to hold 450kg (992lb) of bombs vertically; later types carried a smaller load under the wings.

FUEL NOT GUNS

No guns in the wings meant space for fuel tanks, with extras being added to make the Yak-9D and -9DD long range fighters.

"FAST, MANOEUVRABLE AND WITH AN EXCELLENT RATE OF CLIMB, ITS MAIN DRAWBACK WOULD ALWAYS BE A LACK OF FIREPOWER"

YAKOVLEV YAK-9

COMMISSIONED:	1942
ORIGIN:	SOVIET UNION
LENGTH:	8.55M (27FT 11.5IN)
WINGSPAN:	9.74M (31FT 11IN)
RANGE:	910KM (570 MILES)
ENGINE:	KLIMOV M105PF 12 CYLINDER INLINE 940KW (1,260HP)
CREW:	1
PRIMARY WEAPON:	1 X 20MM SHVAK CANNON & 1 X 12.7MM MACHINE-GUN

ARMAMENT

The Yak-9's standard fit was one 20mm ShVAK cannon (120 rounds) laying through the 'v' in the engine cylinders and pointing through the propeller boss, and one 12.7mm Berezin UBS machine-gun (200 rounds) in the engine cowling.

The 9M, 9U and 9P had an additional machine-gun, while the Yak-9T was tried with a 37mm cannon in a tank-busting role, but the recoil was too heavy for the airframe. Other ground attack options included rocket projectiles and a small bomb load, carried in the Yak-9B in an internal compartment.

A Soviet ace stands by his cockpit, showing the cannon muzzle in his propeller hub

© Getty

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The Yak-9 was optimised for tactical, battlefield use – either counter-air or ground-attack

© Alamy

DESIGN

The Yak-9 was based on the earlier Yak-1 and Yak-7, which were built at a time of severe light alloy shortages. By 1942 the problem was less acute, so the wooden mainspars of the earlier Yaks were replaced with aluminium-copper (dural) alloy ones. The front fuselage was steel framed with a dural skin, but from the rear of the cockpit back the frame was welded steel tubes covered in fabric. The wings had wooden ribs and plywood covering, although from the Yak-9U the ribs were also made of metal.

The Yak's construction gave it distinctive broad wings, especially near the roots

"THE M105PF WAS A SOLID AND RELIABLE ENGINE WITH 940KW (1,240HP) OUTPUT, ALBEIT WITH POOR PERFORMANCE AT HIGH ALTITUDES"

ENGINE

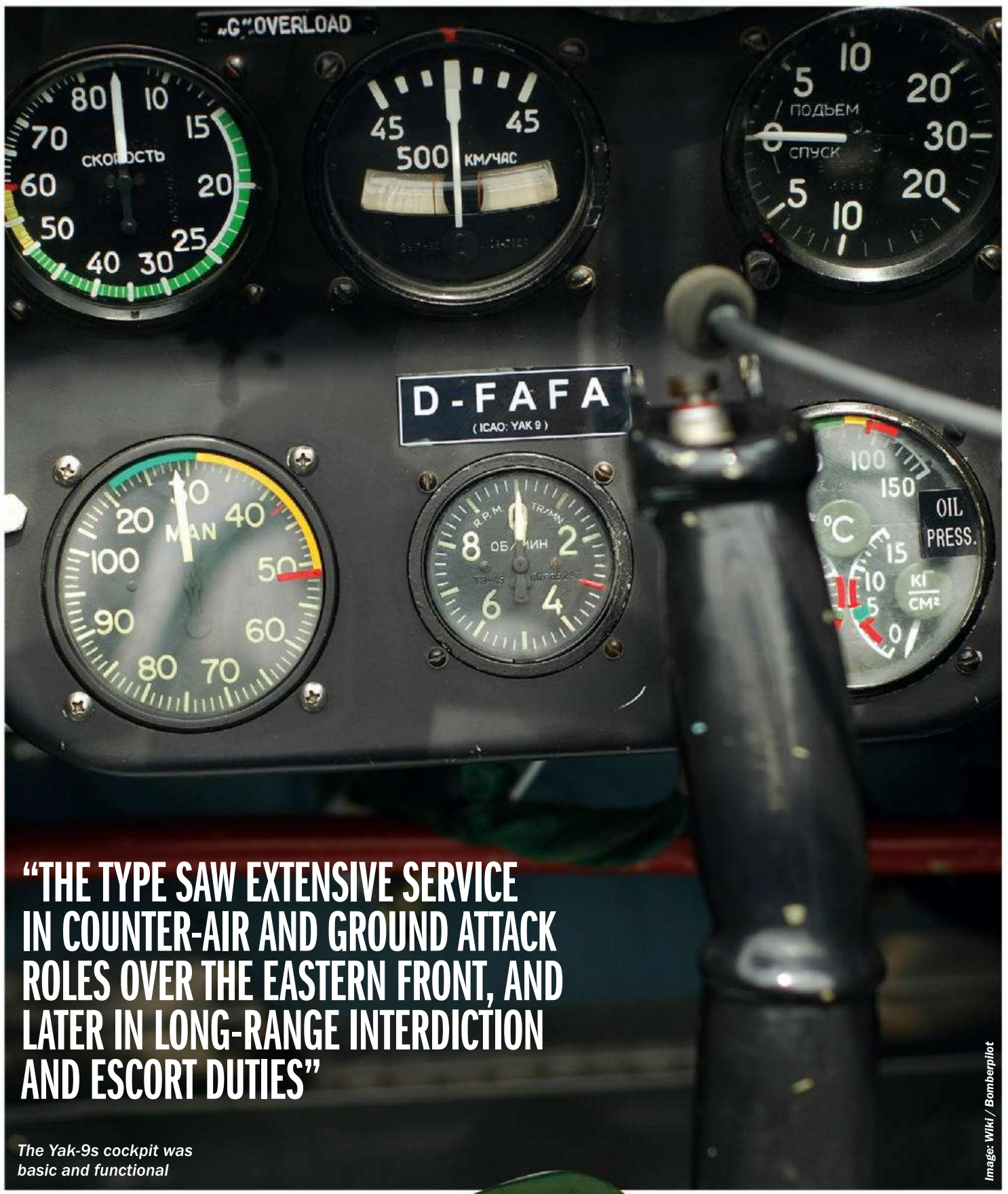
The Klimov M-105 had experienced some teething problems when used in the Yak-1, but by the Yak-9 the M105PF was a solid and reliable engine with 940kW (1,240hp) output, albeit with poor performance at high altitudes. Later models had increased performance, and just as importantly were better laid out, moving the oil cooler from under the nose to the port wing root, while the carburettor intake was moved to the starboard wing root, allowing the nose to become much more elegant and aerodynamic.

Image: Wiki / Alf van Beem

From late 1944, the Yak-9U used the much more powerful VK 107A

Later versions of the M-105 allowed for a more streamlined nose

Image: Wiki / Alan Wilson



"THE TYPE SAW EXTENSIVE SERVICE IN COUNTER-AIR AND GROUND ATTACK ROLES OVER THE EASTERN FRONT, AND LATER IN LONG-RANGE INTERDICTION AND ESCORT DUTIES"

The Yak-9s cockpit was basic and functional

Image: Wiki / Bomberpilot

SERVICE HISTORY

In 1942 a major series of updates to the Yak-7 saw the resulting aircraft designated the Yak-9. Entering service in the winter skies over Stalingrad late that year, the aircraft rapidly proved a fearsome dogfighter, although one hampered by lack of firepower. After introduction into Soviet Guards regiments, the type was spread to many others including several Polish units and the Free French 'Normandie' Regiment, who chose the type in mid-1943. The type saw extensive service in counter-air and ground attack roles over the Eastern Front, and later in long-range interdiction and escort duties. The Yak-9 escorted USAAF bombers operating over Romania, and a unit even briefly operated from Italy over Yugoslavia, until moving to that country to support Marshal Tito's partisans. After 1945, the type was used in many Communist countries into the early 1950s, including with the North Korean air force in the opening months of the Korean War.

The Yak 9 compared favourably in performance with the North American Mustang at low and medium altitudes

COCKPIT

The cockpit of the Yak-9 was, like the rest of the aircraft, rough but functional. Situated unusually far back due to the nose cannon, the pilot had a limited forward downward view but otherwise the bubble cockpit gave good all-round vision. The instrument panel was sparse by Western standards, making it uncluttered but not always comfortably laid out; the bomb release lever, for example, was right next to the engine supercharger on the left side of the cockpit. Pulling the wrong lever while making a ground attack run could have disastrous consequences.

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Yak-9 fighter squadron lined up at Foggia airport, Italy

Image: Wiki / PD / CC

Although far back, the cockpit gave an excellent air-to-air view

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SOME DEATHS SHOCK THE WORLD, OTHERS CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY

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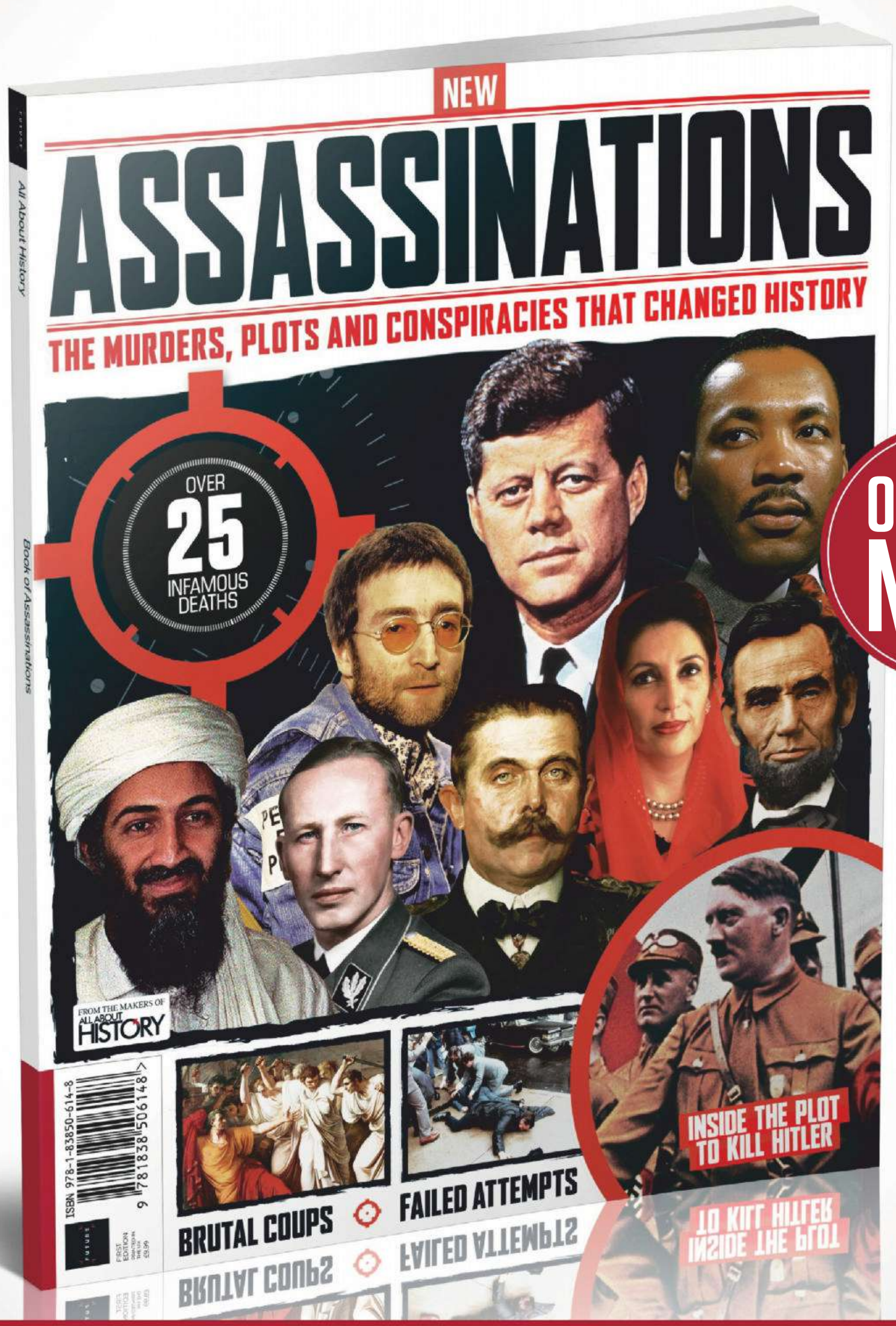

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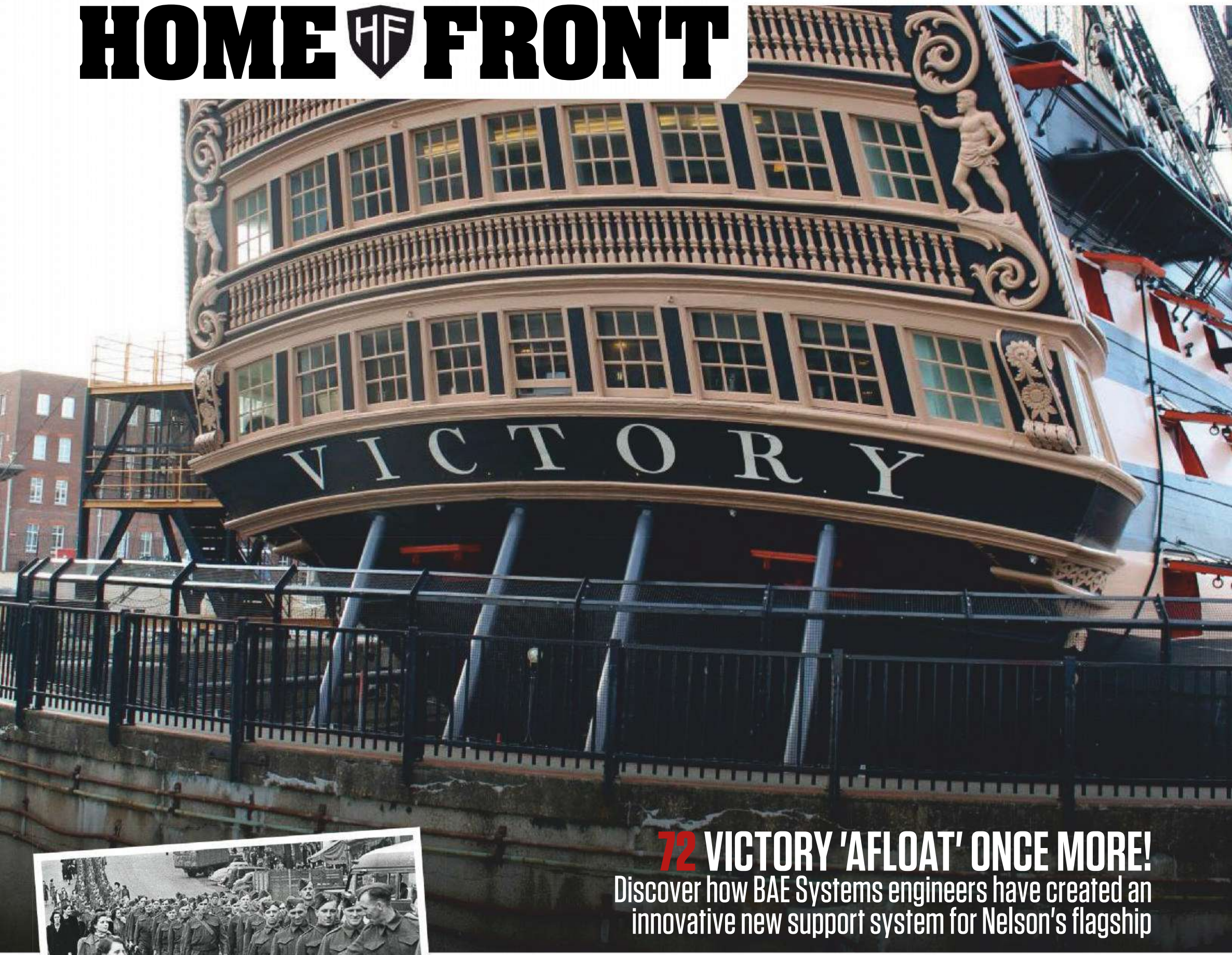

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Discover how BAE Systems engineers have created an innovative new support system for Nelson's flagship

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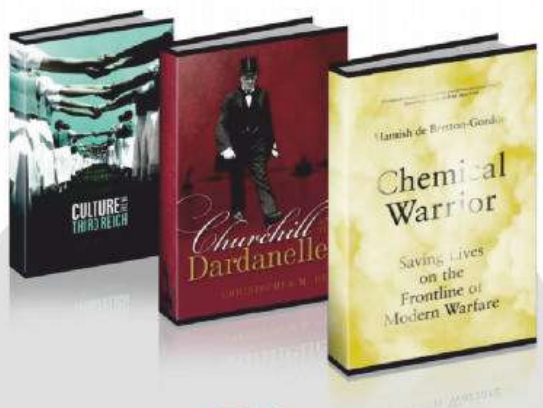

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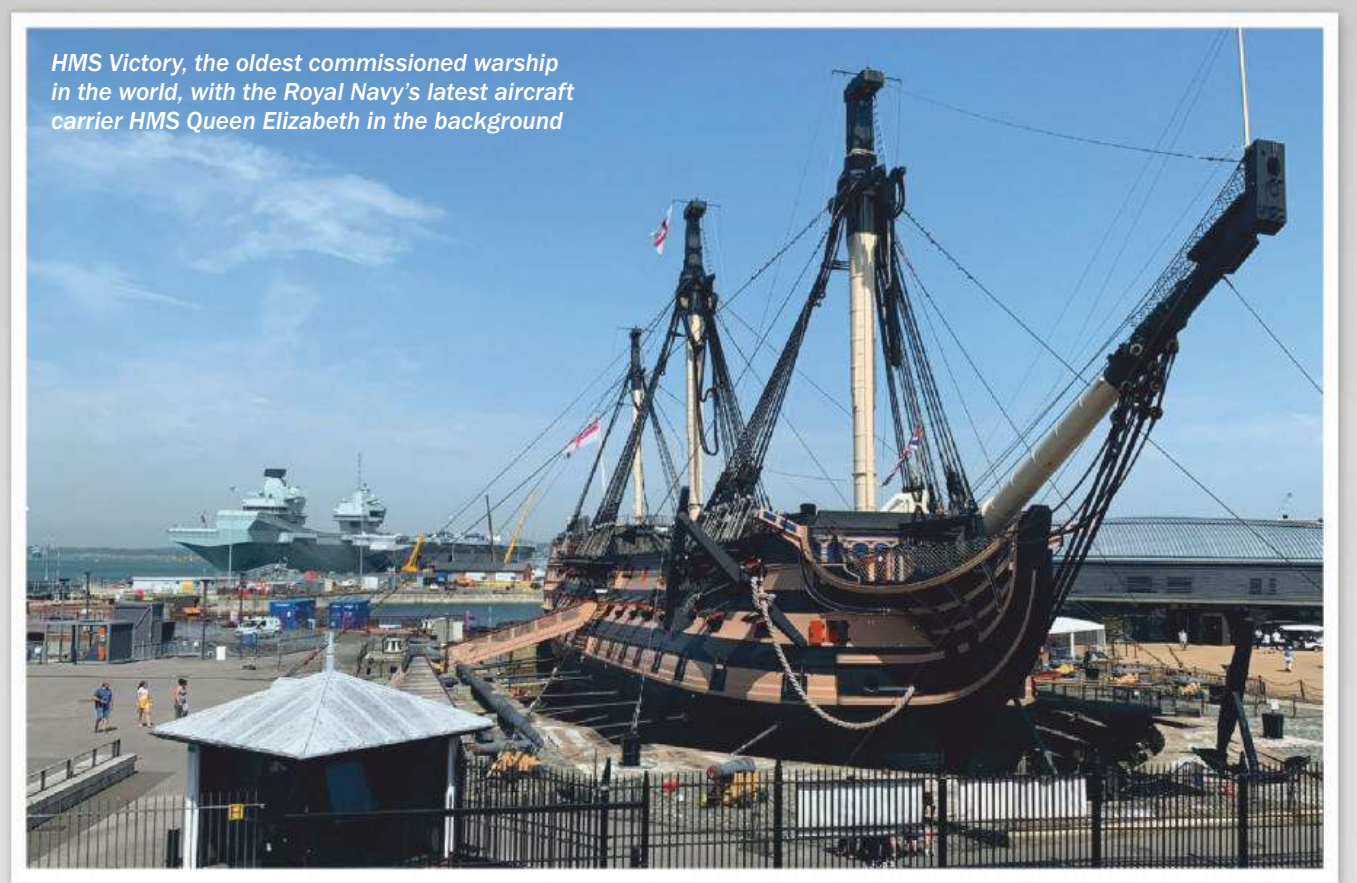
MUSEUMS & EVENTS

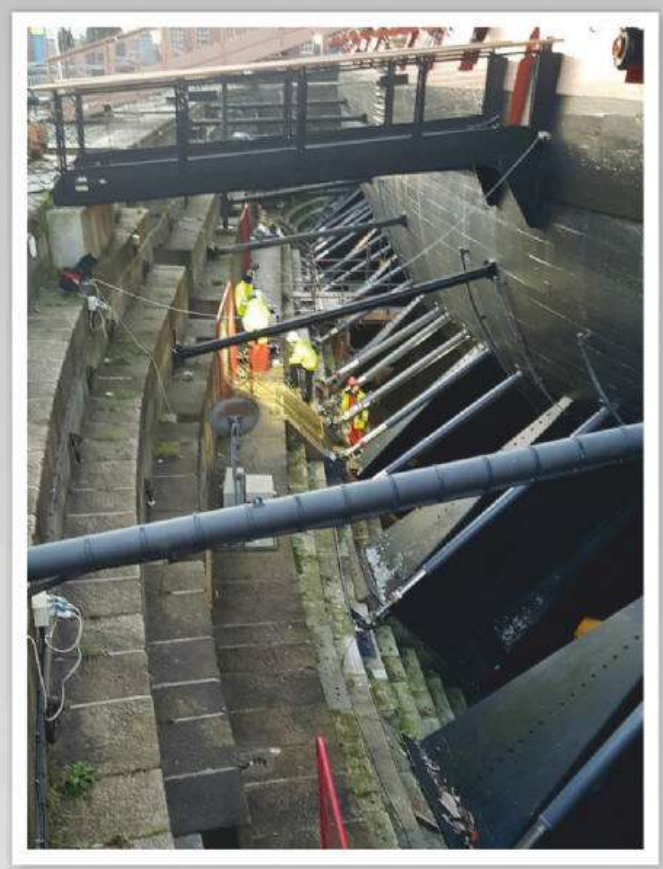
Walk beneath HMS Victory, experience the Battle of Britain underground and discover a new Churchill collection at Chartwell

Victory under the hull

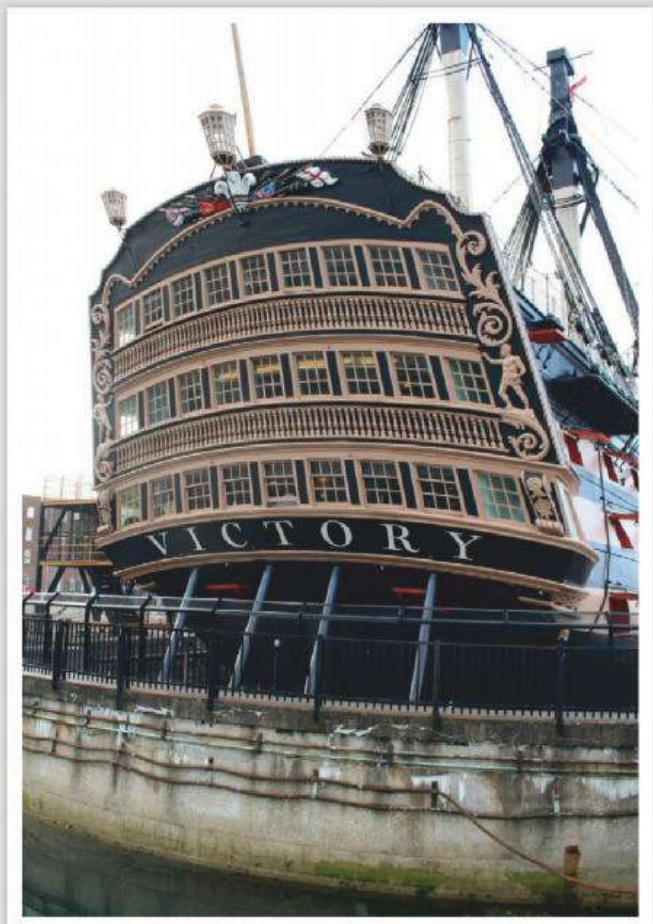
Thanks to a remarkable restoration project, Nelon's flagship is now supported above visitors, replicating the ship floating on the water



HMS Victory, the oldest commissioned warship in the world, with the Royal Navy's latest aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth in the background



A port side view of HMS Victory's old steel cradles with some of the new props



New steel props support HMS Victory's famous transom

In a unique collaboration between the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) and BAE Systems, HMS Victory – Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson's iconic flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar – has reached a major milestone with a multi-million pound conservation project. This project, which has continued despite the UK's nationwide lockdown, has unveiled a new state-of-the-art support for the ship that replicates the environment of being in water.

In a world-first, the specifically engineered design made up of 134 individual smart props provides better support for HMS Victory's hull. Real-time data of weight distribution provides early warnings of faults or weaknesses in the ship that can be caught and fixed before even being visible to the human eye. Since the reopening of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on 24 August 2020, visitors have been able to view the new system up close for the first time. Visitors can now walk down the 'Under Hull Path' to the bottom of HMS Victory's dry dock, walk under the enormous hull and take in the extraordinary scale of the body of the ship.

The innovative system replaces 22 steel cradles which were installed when HMS Victory first entered its dry dock in 1922. The integrity of the ship, when in operation, would usually be maintained by the pressure of the sea pressing against the hull and keel. However, without this pressure, the 3,600 ton ship gradually began to sag under its own weight. Thanks to BAE Systems' engineering expertise, HMS Victory is now supported by a network of technology which monitors the ship's weight distribution and enables adjustments to be made, mimicking the variable pressures of the sea.

Andrew Baines, project director from the NMRN says, "Reaching this halfway stage, in a two-decade long conservation project, is an extraordinary achievement. Each prop has a load cell so we can know, on a minute-by-minute basis, how much of HMS Victory's weight is being carried. This provides the museum with an invaluable insight into her stability and helping us to prevent damage to her structure. Before the pandemic hit we had hit a critical stage in the project, so it was fantastic that we were able to work with BAE Systems to get back up and running within social distancing restrictions so quickly."

Rob Hanway, Victory programme manager from BAE Systems says, "We are delighted to be working in support of the NMRN charity, once again demonstrating our commitment to investing in the local community, and contributing to the UK's collective national heritage."

Images © National Museum of the Royal Navy and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

For more information and to buy advanced tickets for HMS Victory visit: www.historicdockyard.co.uk

Subterranean Sky Defence

The Battle of Britain Bunker in Uxbridge is a unique underground experience where covert operations helped to achieve the RAF's most famous victory

Located on the suburban edge of west London, the Battle of Britain Bunker is a museum based around the underground Operations Room that was part of RAF Uxbridge. Used by No. 11 Group Fighter Command, the Bunker was notably used during the Battle of Britain and also on D-Day. It was a key part of the world's first integrated air defence system to defend Britain's airspace, which was known as the 'Dowding System' after Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding.

Now run by Hillingdon Council as a heritage attraction, the Battle of Britain Bunker Exhibition and Visitor Centre is a 2,000 square metre complex on two levels. Its exhibition hall features state-of-the-art museum displays and there is also a 95-seat auditorium along with a café and gift shop. The exhibition traces the development of Britain's air defence system from WWI to 1945 with rare artefacts and audio-visual interactives. Visitors can also go underground to visit the Bunker and original Operations Room, which is presented as Winston Churchill would have seen it on 15 September 1940.

All visits must be booked in advance online or visitors can make a virtual visit to the museum. There are also tours running at a smaller capacity and a pre-recorded tour is available upon request for those who are unable to attend the Bunker itself.

The plotting table in the bunker's Operations Room

A replica Spitfire greets visitors at the gates of the museum

Source: Wiki / Harrison49 / Danielstirland

For more information visit:
www.battleofbritainbunker.co.uk

***Above:** The restored secretary office at Chartwell*

***Left:** Nonie Chapman, one of Churchill's former secretaries, sits in front of a typewriter in the restored office*

Images: National Trust / Kate York

Churchill's Treasures

The National Trust has acquired hundreds of items that belonged to the wartime prime minister for his preserved Chartwell family home

A £7.1 million project has successfully acquired and conserved hundreds of items that once belonged to Sir Winston Churchill. It has led to a transformation in the presentation of the former prime minister's family home of Chartwell in Kent, which is now a National Trust property. The items were previously on long-term loans and include personal mementoes and gifts from around the world. Highlights include a map case given to Churchill by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, his Nobel Prize for Literature from 1953, a wooden speech box and even a pair of hairbrushes made of wood from HMS Exeter.

New research has simultaneously been undertaken to provide a deeper understanding of Churchill's life at Chartwell before and after WWII. New interactive displays share the results of the research to tell the story of the Churchill family and their guests. Visitors can also see a room that was used by his secretaries for the first time. With a mix of audio-visual interactives and original collection items, the room has been recreated to how it looked in the 1950s. Visitors will be able to hear audio recordings from former secretaries as they explain what tasks they undertook at Chartwell.

Zoe Colbeck, General Manager at Chartwell says, "Chartwell was Churchill's beloved family retreat away from the stresses of political life and he often spoke of his wish for a museum on site at the house after his death. We have been delighted that so many who shared our ambition donated to save such a wealth of items and make them more accessible to future generations."

For more information visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

WWII THIS MONTH...

OCTOBER 1940

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

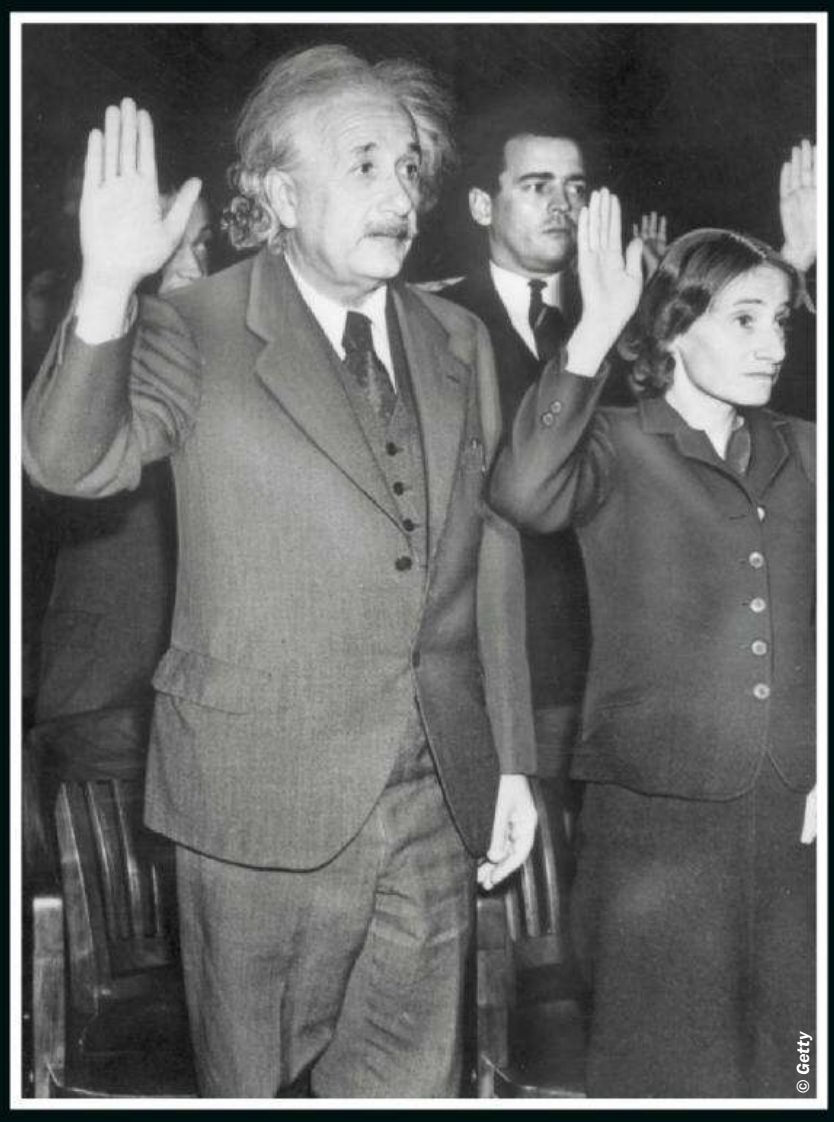
"WAIT FOR ME, DADDY"

This iconic image was captured on 1 October 1940, by American photographer Claude P. Dettloff. The photo shows The British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles) marching in New Westminster, Canada, en route to a secret posting now known to be Vancouver Island.

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

A NEW CITIZEN

Pictured, Albert Einstein swears the oath of allegiance to the USA, during the ceremony making him a US citizen. Einstein left Germany during the 1930s to live abroad, during which time Hitler and the Nazi party rose to power. Of Jewish descent, Einstein realised the dangers of returning to Germany and settled in New Jersey. Though born in Ulm, Germany, he had already renounced his German citizenship in 1896, and became a Swiss citizen five years later. While living in America, he co-signed a letter to President Roosevelt warning of the potential for new, incredibly destructive nuclear weapons.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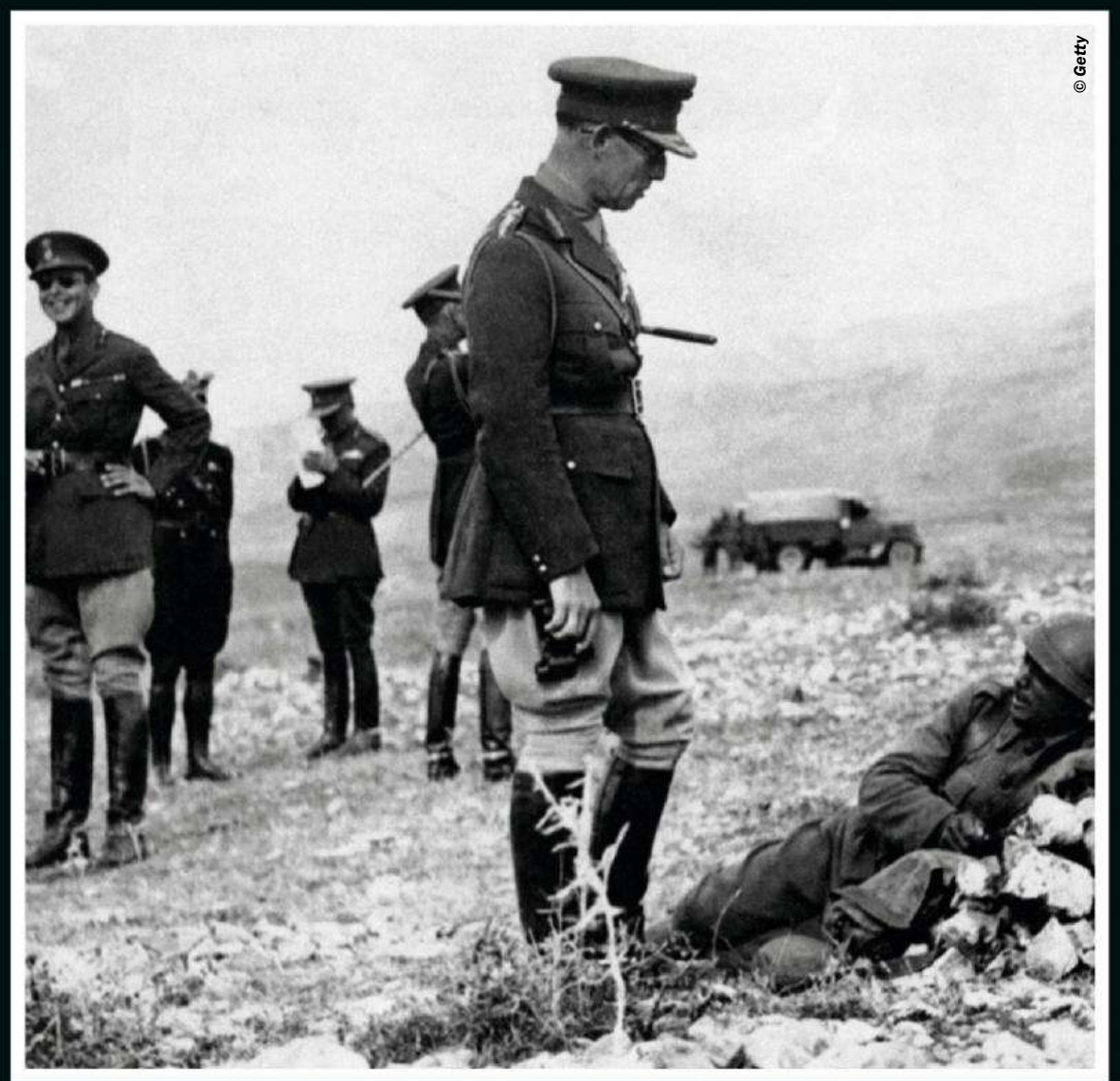
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ITALY INVADES GREECE

Eager to continue his expansion across the Mediterranean, Mussolini launched his attempted invasion of Greece on 28 October. Most notable was that Il Duce pressed on with his plans without fully informing the Germans, causing outrage in Berlin. The offensive was launched from Italian-occupied Albania, which had been seized in 1939, but failed to make a significant breakthrough. After stalling just weeks later, the Italians were eventually pushed back by a Greek counter-attack. Pictured, Greece's King Georges II visits troops on the frontline.

"THE OFFENSIVE WAS LAUNCHED FROM ITALIAN-OCCUPIED ALBANIA, WHICH HAD BEEN SEIZED IN 1939"

WARSAW GHETTO

In October, the Nazis announced the creation of a ghetto in Warsaw, to which the city's Jewish population was ordered to relocate. A Judenrat (Jewish council) was set up for the ghetto, under the premise of organising the community, carrying out Nazi policies and overseeing daily governance. These councils were formed in several Nazi-occupied territories, and community leaders such as politicians and rabbis often joined them in the mistaken belief they could mitigate the Nazis' policies, or in order to avoid those policies themselves. By November, the Warsaw Ghetto numbered over 450,000 people.

© Getty

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

A CALL TO SPY

A MUST-SEE WWII DRAMA ACKNOWLEDGING A TRIO OF EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN

Certificate: TBC Director: Lydia Dean Pilcher Cast: Sarah Megan Thomas, Stana Katic, Linus Roache, Radhika Apte Released: 23 October 2020

Super-charged by an excellent screenplay from Sarah Megan Thomas, who also headlines as pioneering secret agent Virginia Hall, *A Call To Spy* (2020) is a riveting, well-paced historical thriller about the lives of three remarkable women: an American ex-pat with a wooden leg, an Indian Muslim and a Romanian Jewish émigré. As shown in Lydia Dean Pilcher's film, their individual and collective contributions to the Allied war effort via the French Resistance were ground-breaking and extraordinarily brave.

Jean-Pierre Melville's *Army Of Shadows* (1969) is and always will be the greatest film ever made about the years of the underground movement to disrupt and sabotage the Nazi war machine in Occupied France, but *A Call To Spy* shares with that singular masterpiece a complete lack of rose-tinted specs nostalgia for deeds of defiance and daring-do, presenting it for what it was: a most dangerous undertaking fraught with an array of threats and potential betrayal at every turn.

All history-based movies take liberties with timelines and character portraits, it's part and parcel of the medium. What most impresses about *A Call To Spy*, besides the menfolk riding shotgun for once, is how in between the high tension, it finds breathing space to examine the different types of prejudices each woman faced. Hall was disabled (the SS gave her a nickname, 'the Limping Lady'), Noor Inayat Khan (Radhika Apte) was mixed race, while their Romanian handler, Vera Atkins (Stana Katic), had to contend with anti-Semitism and constant suspicions she is a double agent. **MC**

Image source: Signature Entertainment UK

CHEMICAL WARRIOR

SYRIA, SALISBURY AND THE SAVING OF LIVES AT WAR

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF A PERSONAL CRUSADE AGAINST CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Author: Hamish de Bretton-Gordon **Publisher:** Headline **Price:** £20

Most people would consider chemical warfare to be a modern phenomenon, but as Hamish de Bretton-Gordon outlines in this fascinating book, its use has been documented for thousands of years – the ancient Spartans employed it around 2,400 years before it was unleashed on the battlefields of World War I.

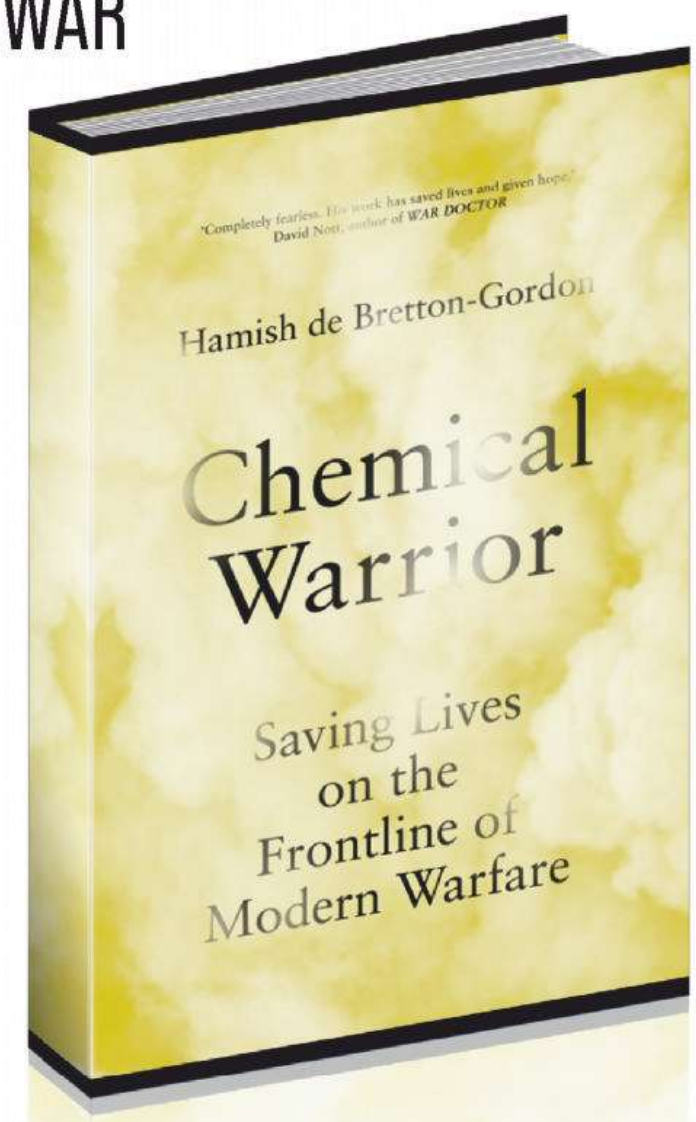
It is doubtful that anyone has fond memories of encounters with chemical weapons, but the author (known conveniently as DBG), had a particularly harrowing introduction. Caught in a supposed sarin gas attack in Iraq, in 1991, he found that his gas mask was not functioning properly and was faced with the impossible choice of either suffocating to death, or taking his mask off and dying from exposure to the gas.

As it turned out, no sarin had actually been deployed during the attack, but the traumatic experience would stay with DBG for years, making his subsequent career path both ironic and cathartic. Having hoped to command a tank regiment, DBG was instead placed in charge of the relatively new Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Regiment, in 2004. Still plagued with nightmares over his experience with chemical agents, DBG would now be in charge of finding and neutralising some of the deadliest weapons on the planet.

As the author explains, this would be about as far removed from tank warfare as it was possible to be. The battlefield behemoths may have been entering their twilight years, but rolling into battle encased in a strong armoured shell offered a level of security that a gas mask could not match.

His move to command the CBRN Regiment was the first step in an unlikely journey, one that would take the man who had once been convinced he was about to die from a chemical attack to a position as the British Army's leading chemical weapons expert. After leaving the army, he would continue to work in the field, advising doctors and civilians on how to cope with chemical weapon attacks, and co-founding Doctors Under Fire. It is a remarkable story of rising above a truly terrifying experience and making a genuine difference in the world, and the book ends with a neatly symbolic episode. When he came under chemical attack from ISIS, more than 20 years after that first, panic-stricken introduction to chemical weapons, DBG was able to remain calm and lead a group of Peshmerga fighters in coping with the attack and then retaliating against the ISIS forces responsible. "I felt as if a psychological load had been lifted," he writes of the experience, "and there was nothing now left for me to fear."

DBG's writing is clear and enjoyable, making the book a pleasure to read. The reader is taken through experiences in Iraq, through the current nightmare in Syria and even the Novichok poisoning in Salisbury, often combatting another pernicious enemy – the propaganda and conspiracy theories that blow up, either spontaneously or deliberately, in the wake of incidents. **DS**



"IT IS A REMARKABLE STORY OF RISING ABOVE A TRULY TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE AND MAKING A GENUINE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD"

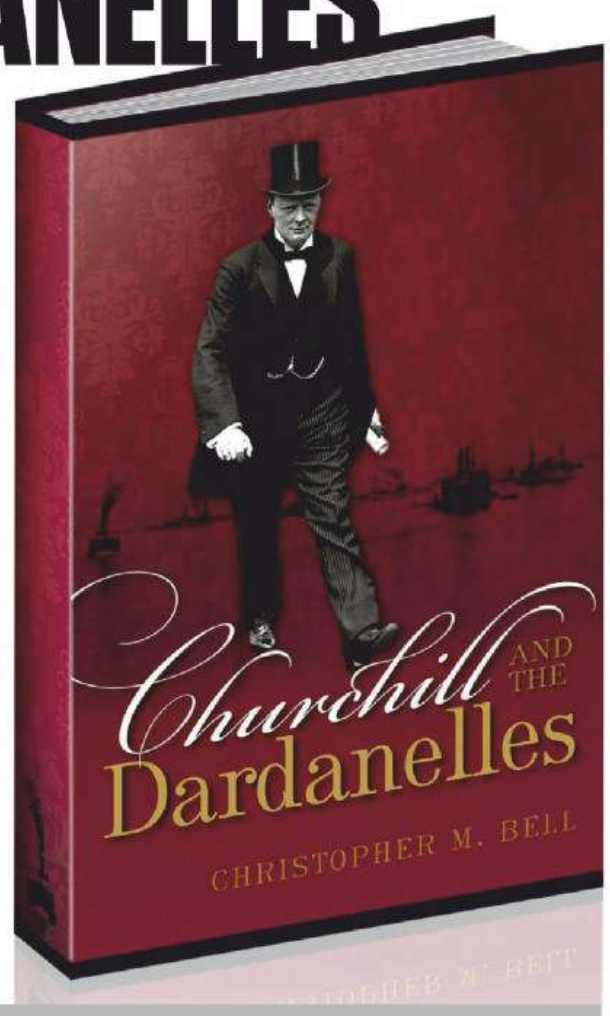
German machine-gunners with gas masks during a practice manoeuvre 1917

© Alamy

CHURCHILL AND THE DARDANELLES

A NEW STUDY OF PERHAPS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL CAMPAIGN OF THE BRITISH HERO'S CAREER

Writer: Christopher M Bell **Publisher:** Oxford University Press **Price:** £12.99



The First World War campaign in the Dardanelles was famously one that very nearly destroyed the career and reputation of Winston Churchill for good. However, his decades-long battle to clear his name and restore his standing in both the military and the political arena would ultimately pay off and set the stage for his eventual appointment as prime minister in Britain's 'darkest hour' and to thus steer the nation to its 'finest hour'.

At first sight, this appears to be a somewhat 'academic' book which might be a difficult work to wade through. However, it is an extremely absorbing and highly readable work which casts new light on not only Churchill himself but on the much wider issues of the relationships between the military and civilian governments during the First World War.

If the potential reader thought they knew the story of Churchill and the Dardanelles campaign, then they should think again and read what is an utterly fascinating account. In it, Bell demonstrates the rigour of his research and makes a series of valid, objective, balanced and fair assessments, which enable a much clearer understanding of the campaign and its key players.

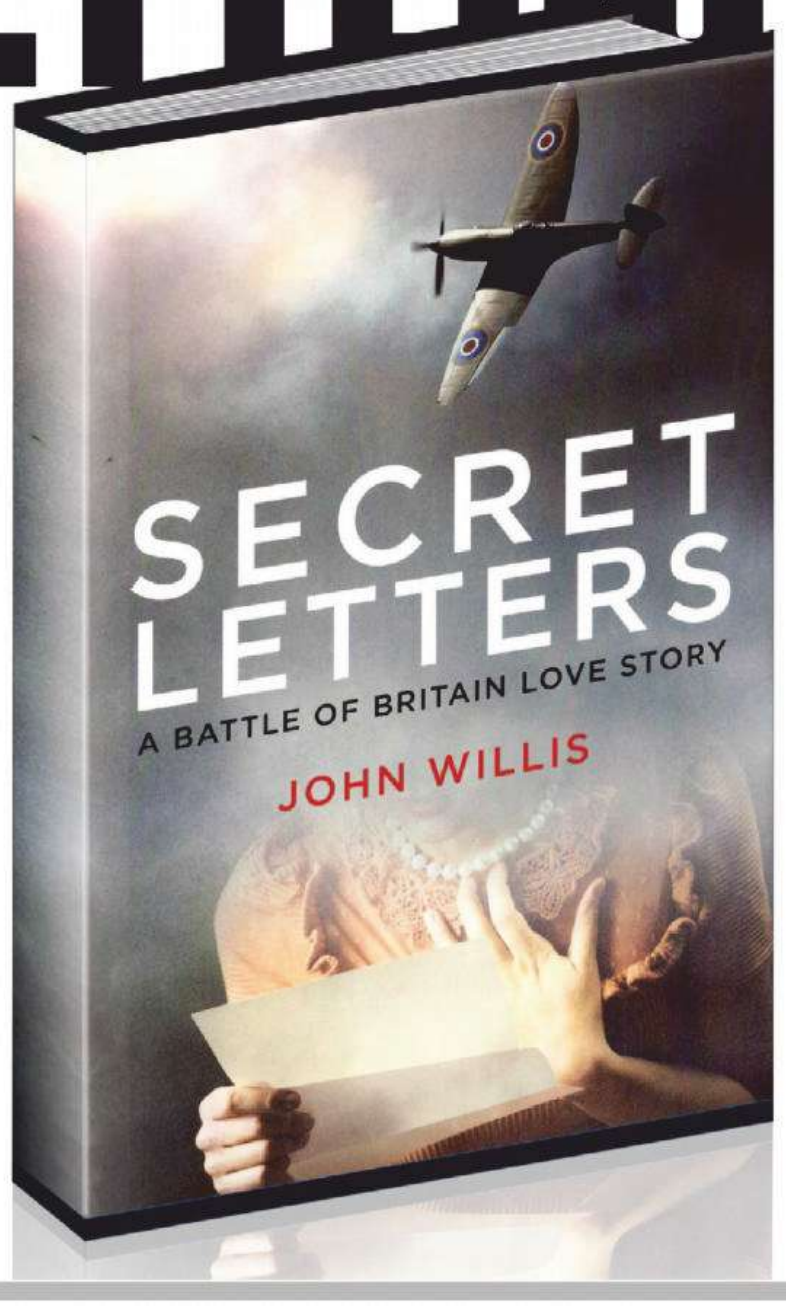
If the 1919 Dardanelles Commission Report was intended to quiet the rancour and finger-pointing, then it singularly failed to do so. However, it is fair to say that the publication of Bell's book does draw a line under things in a way that the 1919 report failed to do and reaches conclusions that adds greatly to our clearer understanding of events. **AS**

SECRET LETTERS

A BATTLE OF BRITAIN LOVE STORY

Writer: John Willis **Publisher:** Mensch Publishing **Price:** £18.99

BASED ON PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM PILOT OFFICER GEOFFREY MYERS, THIS BOOK PROVIDES A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO LIFE DURING THE CRITICAL MONTHS OF 1940



With the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, we might reasonably have expected the publication of a plethora of new titles covering this well-trodden genre. Among those with a passion for the subject, there was doubtless a weary anticipation that we would see more of the 'same old'. But *Secret Letters* is in a different league.

John Willis's truly superb work is based on letters written by Geoffrey Myers (the intelligence officer with 257 Squadron throughout the Battle of Britain) to his wife, Margot. Letters that were written, but never sent. This was because Myers had left his wife and children behind in France, and he expected that they would never be read – not least of all because the family were Jewish.

These letters are a wonderful contemporary account of the Battle of Britain as seen through the eyes of a man who lived and worked with some of 'the Few'. Reading them, we find sadness, humour, tragedy and drama as Myers sets out the day-to-day life of a front line fighter squadron. We see the foibles and eccentricities of some of the pilots, including fascinating insights into their daily lives and a brutally frank revelation concerning one of the squadron's COs who would prove to be ineffectually disastrous.

It would be wrong of the reviewer to reveal what eventually happened to Geoffrey's Jewish family who were trapped in hostile territory. Suffice to say, though, that this is unquestionably the most fascinating book on the Battle of Britain that this reviewer has ever read – and he has read many! **AS**

CULTURE IN THE THIRD REICH

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE CULTURE OF THE THIRD REICH

Author: Moritz Föllmer (Translated by Lesley Sharpe and Jeremy Noakes) **Publisher:** Oxford University press
Price: £20 **Released:** Out now

Moritz Föllmer's *Culture Of The Third Reich* sets out to examine not only the cultural identity of the Third Reich, but how the careful cultivation of that identity played a vital part in the acceptance of the regime. Much has been written on the subject but Föllmer approaches the material from a new angle, shining a spotlight on what culture actually meant in the Reich, from committed supporters of the Nazis at one end of the spectrum, to those who were its innocent victim at the other.

Föllmer guides the reader through the cultural landscape of the Third Reich from 1933 until 1945, as Goebbels strove to create a cultural identity that would be recognised instantly as that of National Socialism. From movies to magazines, mass rallies and even beauty pageants, the book illustrates in chilling detail the way that culture became a weapon of propaganda, crafted for mass appeal whilst preaching a message of domination and hatred.

Culture Of The Third Reich is obviously situated firmly in the field of cultural studies, and it is here that the book runs into its only real sticking point. Occasionally concepts seem to get lost in translation and though these instances are few and far between, it does mean that the text becomes a little clunky on a small number of occasions. That is a small complaint though and on the whole does no harm to a fascinating work. *Culture Of The Third Reich* may not be for the more casual reader, but this insightful book has much to recommend it. **CC**

"FROM MOVIES TO MAGAZINES, MASS RALLIES AND EVEN BEAUTY PAGEANTS, THE BOOK ILLUSTRATES IN CHILLING DETAIL THE WAY THAT CULTURE BECAME A WEAPON OF PROPAGANDA"

Mass assemblage of political leaders on the searchlight-illuminated Zeppelin field in Nuremberg, September 1937

Images: Wiki / PD / CC / US National Archives Administration

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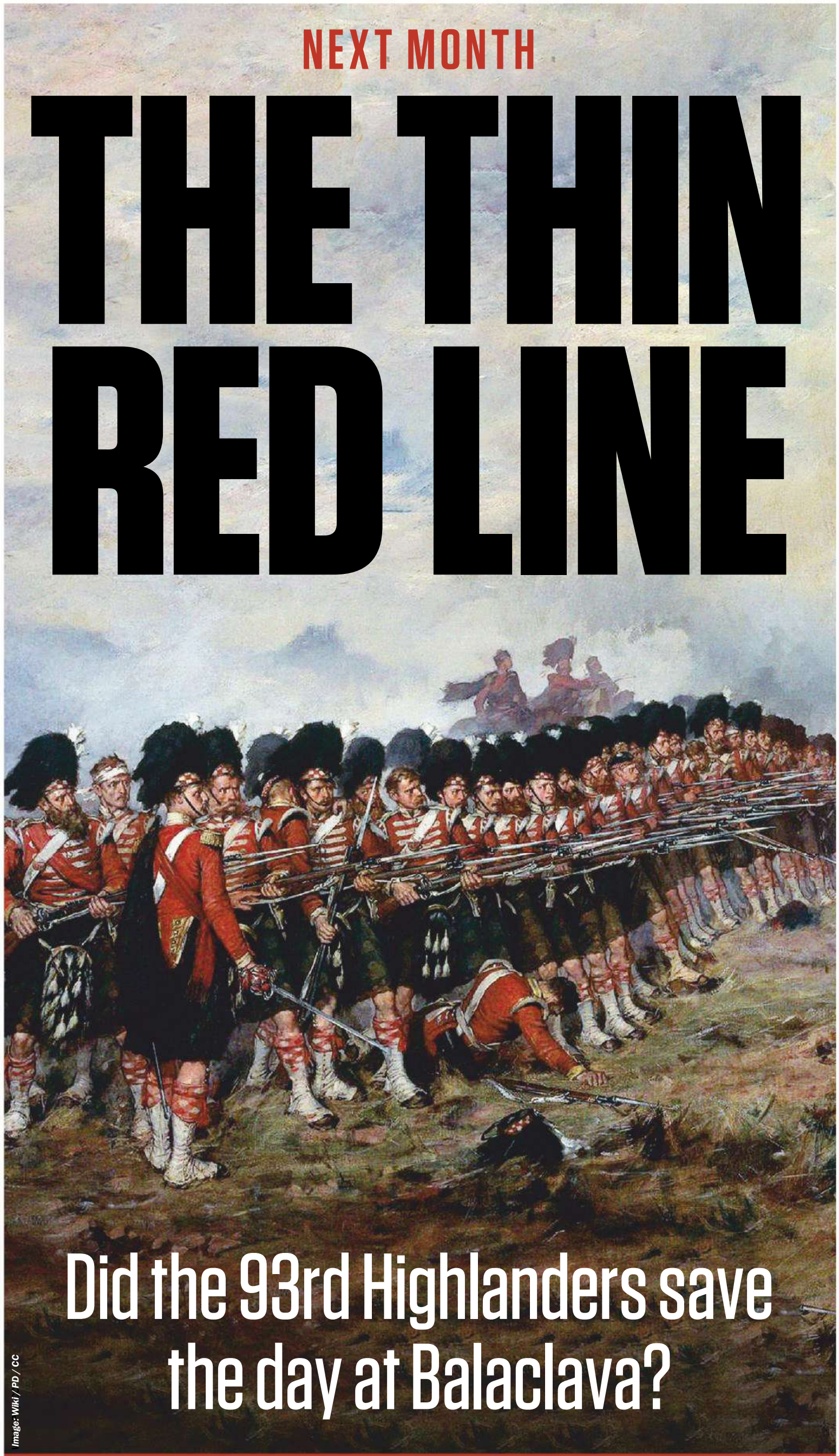

Did the 93rd Highlanders save the day at Balaclava?

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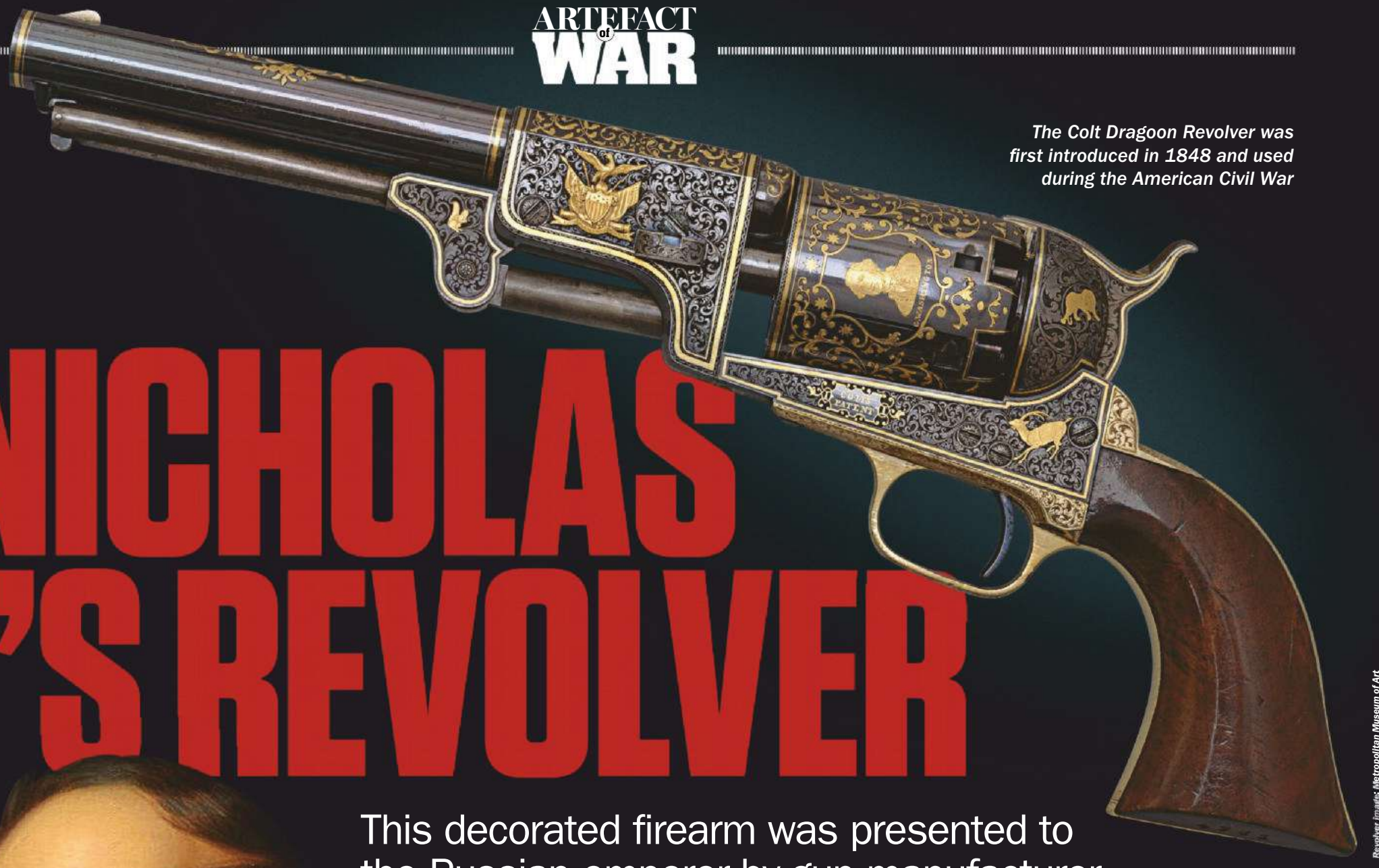


The Colt Dragoon Revolver was first introduced in 1848 and used during the American Civil War

Revolver image: Metropolitan Museum of Art

NICHOLAS I'S REVOLVER

This decorated firearm was presented to the Russian emperor by gun manufacturer Samuel Colt during the Crimean War

Nicholas I's Russia was, according to historian Barbara Jelavich, "characterised by graft, corruption and inefficiency" and was totally unprepared for the Crimean War

The American inventor of the first mass-produced multi-shot revolving firearm, Samuel Colt (1814-62), was one of the most successful arms manufacturers of his time. His innovative, machine-made weapons earned him a vast fortune and he boosted his sales by presenting deluxe guns to powerful men. Colt's famous revolvers were highly valued and he began experimenting with elaborate decorations. Specialist German gun engravers were employed at his factory at Hartford, Connecticut, from 1853 to produce ambitiously decorated weapons. Defined by gold-inlaid, the finest Colt guns had blue, steeled surfaces that were engraved with dense patterns and motifs such as people and animals.

Some of the most luxurious revolvers were presented to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia in 1854 while Colt was visiting Europe. The Crimean War was at its height that year with Russia fighting a coalition of the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France and Sardinia. Nicholas received three gold-inlaid Dragoon-model revolvers from Colt, which proudly displayed their American origins. This pictured pistol features a portrait of President George Washington on the revolving cylinder as well as the arms of the United States while another featured the Capitol Building. In addition to the gold-inlaid, the revolver is also made from the finest steel, brass and walnut wood.

As a depiction of one of Britain's greatest enemies, along with the quality of its construction, Nicholas would have undoubtedly been pleased with the revolver. He was an intensely militaristic ruler who regarded his army as the greatest institution in Russia. However, despite his luxurious personal weapons, the Crimean War was a disaster for the Russian Empire. Nicholas died in 1855 before the war ended in Russia's defeat and his reign is regarded as a failure.

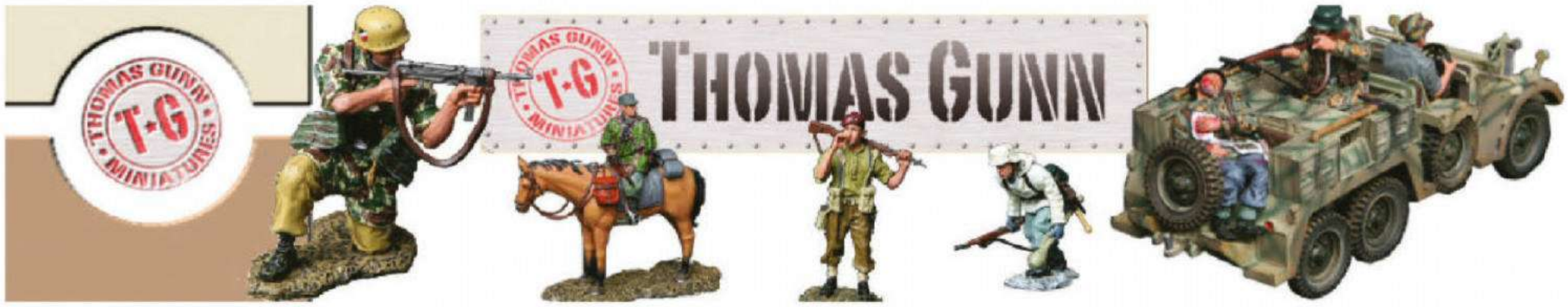
"SOME OF THE MOST LUXURIOUS REVOLVERS WERE PRESENTED TO TSAR NICHOLAS I OF RUSSIA IN 1854 WHILE COLT WAS VISITING EUROPE"

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

This Colt revolver is part of the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Known as 'the Met', the museum is the largest art museum in the United States and contains the popular Department of Arms and Armor. For more information visit:

WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG

THE MET



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